DISCOURSES AND SERMONS

FOR EVERY SUNDAY

AND

THE PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR

BY

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TO THE

Professors of St. Mary's Seminary

BALTIMORE

WHOSE DAILY LECTURES FOR OVER A CENTURY HAVE BEEN MIRRORED AND ILLUMINED BY THEIR EVANGELICAL LIVES.

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PREFACE.

The Sermons contained in this volume were, for the most part, preached in the Baltimore Cathedral before large audiences; and the author indulges the hope that they may be favorably received by a wider circle of readers whom his voice could not reach.

They have one merit of not being the result of hasty consideration, but have been the fruit of nearly fifty years' serious meditation in the Sacred Ministry.

The author believes that their brevity will also commend them to the reader; for long discourses are usually tedious and fatiguing. They weigh heavily on the mind as a surfeit of food palls upon the appetite, while short Sermons, like a frugal and nutritious meal, are easily digested and assimilated.

The subjects embraced in this work have been to the writer an unfailing source of joy and comfort, of strength and fortitude during the last half century.

They have been to millions of souls in every age for nearly twenty centuries a fountain of light to those that sat in darkness; they have been an infallible guide to the Christian pilgrim, a consolation to the afflicted, courage to the faint-hearted, food to the hungry, an inexhaustible refreshment to those that thirst after righteousness; they have been wholesome medicine to the sick, a salutary rebuke to the sinner and the hope of eternal life to the faithful followers of Christ. I earnestly trust that they will also reward the pious reader with those heavenly treasures which only the Gospel message can abundantly bestow.

FEAST OF ST. CHARLES,
1908.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.
The General Judgment..... 1

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.
"Am I My Brother's Keeper?"..... 12

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.
Why We Should Rejoice..... 23

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.
Jesus Christ Our Friend..... 32

CHRISTMAS DAY.
"The Word Was Made Flesh and Dwelt Amongst Us"..... 42

THE NAME OF JESUS.
"His Name Was Called Jesus"..... 48

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.
The Mission of Christian Parents..... 57

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.
Christian Marriage..... 68

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.
Growth of the Catholic Church in the United States 78

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.
"Love is the Fulfilling of the Law"..... 89

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.
The Sanctification of our Ordinary Actions..... 97

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.
Secondary Causes of the Growth of the Primitive Church..... 107

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.
The Race for an Unfading Crown..... 116

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.
St. Paul..... 125

PAGE

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.
Christian Manhood..... 133

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.
Spiritual Reading..... 143

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.
Superiority of the Gospel over the Old Law..... 154

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.
Why the Church Honors the Mother of Jesus... 163

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.
Christ's Sovereignty Over the Soul..... 171

PASSION SUNDAY.
The Interior Sorrows of Christ..... 182

PALM SUNDAY.
The Use of Religious Ceremonies..... 193

EASTER SUNDAY.
The Road of Suffering is the Path to Glory..... 201

LOW SUNDAY.
International Peace..... 211

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.
There Shall be One Fold and One Shepherd.... 223

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.
The Hidden Life of the World's Benefactors.... 233

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.
Prayer, Source of Light, Comfort and Strength.. 241

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.
Why the Word of God is Unprofitable to Many Hearers 250

ASCENSION DAY.
Eternal Happiness and Conditions for Attaining It..... 260

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.
The Uses of Adversity..... 269

PAGE

FEAST OF PENTECOST.
Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles..... 278

TRINITY SUNDAY.
Marvelous Diffusion of the Christian Religion... 288

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.
Forty Hours' Adoration..... 297

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.
The Banquet of the Eucharist..... 303

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
"This Man Receiveth Sinners"..... 312

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Loss and Gain..... 321

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Moral Aspects of Suicide..... 330

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
A Personal Providence..... 346

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Prerogatives and Responsibilities of Moral Freedom 355

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Our Dignity as Christians..... 363

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Three Temples..... 373

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Variety in the Works of Creation..... 382

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Study and Imitation of Christ..... 391

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Grandeur and Utility of Public Worship.... 399

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Thanksgiving 409

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Solicitude of Mind..... 418

PAGE

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Reflections on Death..... 426

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Observance of the Lord's Day..... 437

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Blessings of Christian Faith..... 447

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
The Tribunal of Mercy..... 457

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Anger and Revenge..... 466

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Sickness a Season of Divine Mercy..... 477

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Pay What Thou Owest..... 487

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Obedience to All Lawful Authority..... 497

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Lay Co-Operation..... 506

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
Christ the Only Enduring Name in History and the Great Reformer of Society..... 517

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

LUKE XXI, 25-34. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away."

THIS is a grave and awe-inspiring Gospel which you have heard, my dear Brethren. You have not listened to an imaginary tale, nor to a poetical fiction, but to a Gospel truth, to a certain, inevitable prophecy—a prophecy, the time of whose accomplishment is indeed hidden from angels and men, but which shall one day be inevitably fulfilled.

You have heard of an event which affects not only the human race in general, but which concerns you and me in particular; for, as sure as to-morrow's sun will rise, as sure as we are now assembled in this Church, so sure shall you and I rise one day from our graves, and be gathered together at the dread tribunal of God, to receive from our common Judge a last sentence of eternal death or everlasting life. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away."

If some notorious visionary were to announce to you that an attempt would be made to-night to burn your house, no matter how little you would credit the assertions of the man on ordinary occasions, would you not feel some apprehension, and would you not, perhaps, take measures to guard against the contingency of such an event?

What wholesome dread, then, should fill your hearts, what salutary precautions you should take,

when I announce to you to-day a judgment to come which is not an idle dream, but a stern reality, which is not the saying of an untruthful man or foolish visionary, but the solemn declaration of the God of infinite truth, one iota of whose predictions will not pass away till all be fulfilled. "Pierce our hearts with Thy fear, O Lord, that we may fear Thy judgments," and may the thought of the universal judgment which has converted so many others from their evil ways, work a like change in our hearts.

Even though we had no positive revelation of a judgment to come, our sense of divine justice would imperatively demand it. One of God's highest attributes is justice. We can not conceive a God except a just God "who will render to every man according to his works." When we see in this life impiety enthroned and innocence trampled in the dust, when we see the heartless tyrant and the voluptuary enjoy a long and undisturbed tranquillity, and the God-fearing Christian afflicted with life-long pain and sorrow; when we see the artful hypocrite basking in the sunshine of popular esteem, and the unoffending victim of calumny go down to a dishonored grave, branded with the stigma of false accusation, surely our reason calls aloud for a Court of Appeals that "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts;"[1] it demands a divine, infallible tribunal which will expose the secret crimes of libertines and dissemblers, and vindicate before God and man the righteousness of those who suffered for conscience sake. But our Savior sets this matter at rest by His solemn declaration.

Let me lay before you to-day a brief sketch of

[1] I. Cor. iv., 5.

the circumstances which will precede and accompany the General Judgment as they are recorded in the Gospel: "The sun," says our Lord, "shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. The stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved." On that dreadful day, universal darkness shall cover the face of the earth. The elements shall contend in wild confusion, causing a tumult more violent and terrific than the loudest peals of thunder. The earth shall be shaken to its foundation, and horror will reign everywhere.

Amid this general upheaval of the forces of nature, the great Judge will appear in the heavens with power and majesty. "God shall come manifestly," says the Royal Prophet; "our God shall come, and shall not keep silence. A fire shall burn before Him, and a mighty tempest shall be round about Him. He shall call heaven from above, and the earth to judge His people." [1]

"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven," says the Gospel, "and then will all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall all see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven in great power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a loud trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the uttermost bounds thereof."

Then shall Christ be seen bearing His royal standard, the Cross glittering in the heavens, and emerging like the sun from a thick cloud, that cross which is now an emblem of derision and contempt to the ungodly, shall be to them an object of terror and condemnation. They shall see in it the standard they abandoned, and by which

[1] Ps. xlix., 3, 4.

they shall be judged. That cross which is now to the righteous an instrument of sorrow and humiliation, will be hailed by them on that day as a sign of joy and exultation.

How different will be the coming of our Savior at the day of judgment from His advent at His birth! He then came in silence and poverty. On the judgment day He will appear publicly, clothed with glory and majesty. While on earth, His companions were a few humble disciples, but on that day He will be encircled by hosts of angels.

Our Savior came from Heaven before to be our Mediator and Redeemer, as our Friend and Brother, as He is now always making intercession for us. But on the last day He will appear as an unrelenting Judge and Accuser, with the sword of vengeance in His hand to execute judgment on sinners.

And consider the attributes of the Judge before whose tribunal you shall appear. He is a Judge who is omniscient, who will clearly see and reveal to you all the deeds you have done from the time you came to the use of reason till the hour of your death,—a Judge who can not be deceived by vain pretexts and excuses. He is a just Judge, who holds in His hands the scales of even-handed justice, a Judge who can not be intimidated by threats, nor blinded by prejudice, nor moved by bribes and entreaties. He is a Judge whose sentence is final, and from whose supreme tribunal there is no appeal. He is, in fine, an all-powerful Judge whose decision no one can reverse, and who will carry into immediate execution His sentence of eternal life or eternal death.

And now behold the angels sound the last trumpet to call forth the dead, saying: "Awake ye dead and come to judgment."

"We shall all rise again," says the Apostle. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise." [1]

"And I saw the dead," says St. John, "great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened, and another book was opened which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by those things which were written in the Books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to his works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the Book, was cast into the pool of fire." [2]

What a vast assemblage of people will meet on that awful day! Every human being, from the First Adam to the last that is to be born—at the end of time, will stand together at God's dread tribunal. "For," as the Apostle says, "we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether good or evil." [3]

On that day there shall be no distinction of rank, but all shall stand on an equal footing. There shall be no reserved seats at this great theatre where the human family shall meet for the last time. Then will stand together the rich and the poor, kings and subjects, masters and servants. Then no title shall be recognized save the title of a well-spent life. Then no kingly honors shall be of any avail except the royalty of virtue. Then no wealth shall be esteemed except the riches of good works. Then shall be seen in their true light the poverty and emptiness of

[1] I. Cor. xv. [2] Apoc. xx. [3] II. Cor. v., 10.

unjustly acquired riches, and the riches of voluntary poverty. Then shall the pampered and heartless Dives confront the plague-stricken and once poor Lazarus. Then shall Caesar and Alexander, stripped of their imperial purple, stand side by side with the humble peasant. Then shall the chaste Susanna be brought face to face before her tempters and accusers. Then shall Blessed Paul confront the iniquitous Nero, and St. John shall confront the tyrant Domitian. Then shall the relations of Sir Thomas More and Henry the Eighth be reversed.

Oh! my brethren, how different will be the feelings of the just and of the wicked on that momentous occasion. The righteous will rejoice with exceeding great joy that the hour of their public triumph is at hand. They will exult under the benignant smile of their Heavenly Father. Their good works, often done in secret, will be proclaimed to the assembled world. They will be filled with ecstacy in anticipation of the invitation they will receive into the kingdom of Heaven.

But the impious will be filled with inexpressible anguish. They will shrink from the frown of an offended God whose laws they trampled under foot. They will be confounded and shamed by the disclosure of their crimes. "They will be withering away with fear and expectation" of what shall come upon them. "They will say to the mountains: Fall upon us, and to the hills: cover us." If one is disquieted by the frown of an angry man, how can he withstand the thundering voice of the Son of God, pronouncing against him sentence of eternal death?

What will God judge on that day? He will judge our thoughts, words and actions. "The Lord," says St. Paul, "will bring to light the hid-

den things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart." There is not a single unrepented evil thought deliberately entertained from the moment we came to the use of reason till the hour of our death, which shall not be recorded against us in the Book of Life. Our sovereign Judge will scrutinize all the hidden disorders of the soul, and lay them bare before the whole world. "The Word of the Lord," says the Apostle, "is living and effectual, and more penetrating than any two-edged sword, and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Every injurious sentence we have uttered will be manifested on that day. "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account at the day of judgment." Observe! if we shall be responsible for the foolish and frivolous expressions we have used in conversation, what a rigorous account we shall have to render for all our wilful exaggerations and falsehoods; for those cowardly weapons of malicious whisperings, uncharitable hints and innuendos with which we have wounded the reputation of an absent person; for those calumnies, detractions and slanders which have sullied a character dearer to him than life itself. Then shall we be judged for all our evil actions, for the good deeds we have done from vicious motives, and for those works we have neglected to perform.

And now behold, the Book of Life is opened, and the last sentence is about to be pronounced. The eternal Judge, casting a look of tender complacency on the just at His right hand, will thus address them: "Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." Come from darkness

to light. Come from death to life. Come from bondage to the glorious liberty of the children of God. Come, ye Apostles, who were brought before impious judges, and condemned to death by them, in testimony of Me, come now, and sit on thrones, judging with Me the tribes of Israel, and the human race. Come ye Martyrs, who for My sake generously shed your blood, enter into the joy of your Lord. Ye Confessors, who for Me underwent heat and cold and continual labors, exchange a perishable for an imperishable life. Ye Virgins, who preserved yourselves from the blandishments of the world and the defilements of the flesh, follow Me as chaste spouses in the kingdom of My Father. Ye, who have bestowed your goods with a ready hand upon the poor, ye, who have clothed the naked and fed the hungry, come, and be clothed now with raiment brighter than the sun; come, be crowned with diadems of eternal glory, come and drink, in my house, of the torrent of perennial delights.

Then turning to the reprobates on His left hand, with a withering look of reproach, He will say to them: Unhappy creatures! For your sakes I descended from Heaven, I assumed your nature, and dwelt on earth. For you I shed My blood on the Cross. For you I established My Church, that you might be sheltered in her bosom, that you might be nourished by her Sacraments, and enlightened by her teachings. How often did I endeavor to draw you to a virtuous life, by placing before you the rewards of Heaven and the terrors of Hell? But you were influenced neither by the hope of the one nor by the fear of the other. Your heart was steeled against grace, you gloried in your shame. "I called, and you refused. I stretched forth My hand and you did

not regard Me." Therefore, hear your sentence: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." Depart from Me, your God and Creator, whom you have outraged, never to behold My face again. Depart from Heaven which you were created to possess. Depart from My Angels and Saints, whose society you were created to enjoy forever. Depart into everlasting fire.

If this picture which I have drawn, is a faithful representation of the last Judgment,—and you all must be convinced that it is, since Truth has so declared to-day: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away;"—if, I repeat, all I have told you is literally true, what a salutary impression ought these words to produce in your hearts, and how diligently ought you to prepare for the day of the Lord!

This is precisely the manner in which St. Peter reasoned with the primitive Christians of his own time. Having addressed them a letter in which he described the terrible scenes which will take place at the last Judgment, he concluded in these memorable words: "Seeing that all these things are to be dissolved (by fire), what manner of people ought you be in holy conversations and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of the Lord." I can not draw any better moral from this instruction than that suggested by the great Apostle. So do I say to you: If these things are to take place, what a God-fearing people ought you to be! How heavenly and charitable, how circumspect and chaste, should be the sentiments of your heart!

If you are convinced that all the wealth of this world shall be consumed by fire, that nothing will survive you but the odor of your good works or

the stench of your transgressions, how diligent ought you to be in laying up for yourselves treasures in Heaven which will escape the universal ruin, which "the moth can not consume nor thieves break through and steal." In a word, how jealous you should be in seeing that every page in the Book of Life having reference to you shall record some good deed of you on the last day. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," for "if the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

When St. Paul, laden with chains, was brought before Felix, the governor, to be tried for preaching the Gospel of Christ, and when he spoke, says the Acts, to Felix, "on justice, on chastity and on the judgment to come, Felix was terrified." Heaven grant that we, by meditating to-day on our future judgment, may be filled with salutary fear, not with that transitory dread which would vanish as soon as we left the threshold of the Church, but with that sober fear sinking deep into our hearts, and influencing our life and conduct.

If you, then, possess the spirit of true wisdom, if you are alive to your vital interests, put to profit the words you have heard to-day. "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." Strive now, before it is too late to conciliate your Judge, and to avert His wrath. He is now ready to receive you with open arms, saying that He "willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live." He now appeals to you as He did of old to the Hebrew people. "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Henceforth, when you are tempted to yield to any sinful gratification, reflect for a moment on what you are going to do. Weigh in one

scale the fleeting pleasure, and in the other, the eternal shame and confusion which follow after the crime. This thought will serve as a powerful restraint against sin.

I can say to you to-day with almost absolute certainty that before another year rolls by, some of us shall already have passed from the busy scenes of life, and be judged by our Maker, and not one of us can say that he will not be called to his great account.

Strive then, one and all, strive earnestly, strive perseveringly to be placed on the last day at the right hand of your Judge, that you may hear from Him these consoling words: "Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

"AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?"

MATT. XI., 2-10.

JOHN the Baptist is one of the noblest and most striking figures that appear in the pages of the New Testament. As the minister of God, he has the courage to rebuke Herod for his incestuous life. The fulfillment of his sacred duty costs him his liberty and his head. What a striking contrast between John in prison and Herod on his throne! John, though immured in a dark dungeon, is cheerful and resigned, because he has the testimony of a good conscience. Herod on his royal seat, is gloomy and dejected, and eaten up with remorse. Though John is in chains, his soul roams with the freedom of a son of God: Herod, though commanding a kingdom, is a slave to his passions.

John utters no word of murmur or complaint from his prison. He does not plead for sympathy or release. He is so entirely forgetful of his own sufferings and wrongs, that he is concerned only about his Master's business.

He sends two of his disciples to ask our Savior whether or not He is the true Messiah. John does not need this information for his own sake. He knows that Christ is the promised Redeemer, for, on a previous occasion when he met our Lord, he exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world."[1] But he desired that his disciples should learn

[1] John I.

from the lips of Christ Himself that He was the Redeemer who was sent to save the world.

When the disciples asked Christ if He was the true Messiah, what answer did He give? Did He say to them: Know that I am the Son of God because I revel in the splendor of imperial majesty? I dwell in palatial mansions? I am surrounded by an immense army? I am attended by a retinue of courtiers? Kings and princes minister unto Me? He said none of these things.

But this is the test of the proof that He gave of His divine mission: "Go," He says, "and relate to John what ye see and hear. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me."[1] Blessed is he who shall recognize My divinity through the frail wall of My humanity.

Of all the virtues that shine forth in the life of our divine Savior, there is none so prominent, none so conspicuous as His compassion for human suffering. This was His characteristic virtue; this was the salient point in His character, if we may apply the term to One who was perfect in every virtue. On every leaf of the Gospel, that golden word mercy shines forth, brightening every page, cheering every heart.

Never do we find our blessed Redeemer exercising the rigors of His justice, but every day we behold Him doing works of clemency. Seldom do we contemplate Him uttering words of reproof, but at every step we see Him drying up tears of sorrow. Truly, then, can we exclaim with the Royal Prophet: "The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever."[2] And with Saint Paul we may

[1] Matt. xi. [2] Ps. lxxxviii.

cry out: "Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who comforteth us in all our tribulation." [1]

Observe the miracles of Jesus Christ. They are far more remarkable for their utility and beneficence than for their display and terror-inspiring effect. There is as much difference between the miracles of the prophets and those of our Lord as there is between the lightning and thunders of Sinai and the lambent tongues of Pentecost. The one foreshadowed the law of fear and servitude, the other foreshadowed the law of love and clemency.

Our Savior never exercises His divine power as Moses did, by changing rivers into blood and destroying the first-born of the land. He never imitates Josue by commanding the sun to stand in the heavens. He does not, like Elias, call down lightning from Heaven to consume an offending people, though He was entreated to do so by His disciples, to whom He said: "Ye know not of what spirit ye are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save." [2]

No, but the miracles of Jesus were wrought to lessen the sufferings and to lighten the burdens of men. He manifested His power by going about doing good. He gave sight to the blind that they might rejoice in beholding the beauty of creation. He gave speech to the dumb and hearing to the deaf. He gave the power of walking to the lame. He gave health to the sick and life to the dead. He dried up the tears of the widow, and gave His blessing to children. Above all, He displayed His merciful power by receiving with open arms the repenting sinner, by relieving her soul of the bur-

[1] II. Cor. I. [2] Luke ix., 55, 56.

den of her sins, and saying to her: Be of good cheer. Go in peace. "Thy sins are forgiven."

There are three kinds of persons towards whom the compassion of Christ was specially directed, viz.: those who were the victims of corporal infirmities, of mental sufferings, and the poor,—the very classes of people that are overlooked or despised by the world.

How correctly does the parable of the Good Samaritan portray the compassion of Jesus towards those who suffered from bodily diseases; for the Good Samaritan is none other than Jesus Himself. A traveler, while going from Jerusalem to Jericho, falls among thieves. They rob him of his money, they strip him of his garments, and leave him on the road-side covered with wounds. His country-men pass by, but pay no heed to the bleeding man. A Samaritan who is of a different country and religion also comes along; he lifts up the wounded man, pours medicine into his wounds, and binds them; places him on a beast of burden, provides for him in an inn, and sends him back to his family. Is not this an epitome of the life of Jesus, whose whole public career was spent in healing diseases and mitigating physical suffering?

Not less marked was the benevolence of Christ towards those who suffered from mental anguish. What a notable example of His mercy to this class of afflicted is furnished by the raising to life of the widow's son! She is following to the grave the remains of her only child, the solace of her declining years. Jesus, as if by accident, meets the mournful procession. He sees the desolation of the widow's heart. His omnipotent hand touches the bier, and that same almighty power which in the beginning infused a living soul into

Adam, calls back the spirit into the lifeless body of the young man, and restores him to his mother.

We have only three instances recorded in the Gospel of persons being restored to life by our Savior,—Lazarus, the daughter of Jarus, and the son of the widow of Naim. These examples are given as earnests of Christ's merciful power. But how many millions are annually raised, by this same divine power, from the grave of sin to a life of grace and virtue! How many families are made glad that a cherished member is brought back to them! How many a mother sheds tears of joy because a "son who was lost, is found, and having been dead, is come to life again."

But nothing is more manifest in the Gospel than the sympathy of Jesus for the poor. He wished to stamp with condemnation the spirit of the world which estimates a man's dignity by his wealth, and his degradation by his poverty. He chose to be born of humble parentage, in a wretched stable, in an obscure village. Nearly His whole life was spent in a town that was looked upon with contempt. The saying was: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He led a life of poverty not from necessity, but from choice. He could say of Himself what could hardly be affirmed of a beggar: "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay His head."[1] He chose His twelve Apostles from the humblest walks of life, men without wealth or learning, or influence, or any of the qualifications regarded as essential for the success of any great enterprise. He commanded them to preach the Gospel especially to the poor. He wrought his greatest miracles in their behalf. His choicest promises are made to

[1] Matt. viii.

them: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart."

I have set before you these features of the life of Christ, not merely for your admiration, but still more for your edification and example. He is the Ideal we are to follow. The closer we resemble this Divine Model, the nearer we shall approach Christian perfection.

We are social beings; we were created to live in society. No man is sufficient unto himself. We are all mutually and reciprocally dependent on one another, just as the organs of our body are sustained by one another. As an injury to one organ involves a shock to the entire human system, so should the community at large feel a practical sympathy for their fellow-beings in any grievance by which they may be oppressed.

"The eye," says St. Paul, "can not say to the hand, 'I have no need of thee,' or again, the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"[1] And likewise in the social body, the strongest member has need of the weakest.

I care not how rich or powerful you are. You might possess the wealth of a multi-millionaire, but what would it profit you, if you had no servant to minister to you, no companion to cherish you, no friend to grasp your hand? You would be poor and miserable and blind and naked.

What would it benefit a man to own all the coal mines of West Virginia or Pennsylvania, if there were no hardy sons of toil to work those mines, to extract the coal from the bowels of the earth,

[1] I. Cor xii.

and transport it to the various centers of population?

Look at the majestic steamer as she lies in the port of New York. Her experienced captain is pacing the quarter deck. But by his own power, he can not move the vessel; she will not stir an inch. As soon, however, as the officers, engineers and firemen are at their posts, she becomes instinct with life, she gracefully glides down the harbor, and rushes like a huge monster of the deep through the ocean, defying winds and storms, bearing her precious freight across the Atlantic.

What would it profit you to be the owner of Manhattan Island, if you were cut off from all relations and association with its inhabitants?

When Alexander Selkirk was cast on the desert Island of Juan Fernandez, he became its undisputed lord and owner. But in his soliloquy, how feelingly he describes the wretchedness of his solitude:

> "I am monarch of all I survey,
> Of my rights there is none to dispute,
> From the centre all round to the sea,
> I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
> O solitude, where is thy charm
> That sages have seen in thy face,
> Better dwell in the midst of alarm,
> Than reign in this horrible place."

I care not, on the other hand, how limited may be your resources, or how circumscribed your influence, you have a personal mission from God in the Christian Commonwealth, and you can exert some good in your day and generation.

Society is like the planetary system which is composed of greater and lesser bodies held together by reciprocal forces. The moon is the smallest body in our system, and yet what con-

trol she sways in the flow and ebb of the ocean tides. How much we would miss her monthly visits when she sheds over the earth her pale and silvery light. She generously shares with us the effulgence she borrows from the great orb of day.

And so, no matter how insignificant you may be, you can exert some beneficial power over the tide and flow of human passions, and diffuse a calm and blessed light on those that fall within your environment.

The benevolence of Christ was not exercised in promiscuous alms-giving. His benefactions usually consisted in removing diseases from the bodies of men, or in bringing them such timely relief as would enable them to stand on their feet and resume some honest avocations of life. Thus we find Him healing the paralyzed man that he might use his arms to support life; cleansing the leper, that he might take his place again in society, and feeding the multitude, to enable them to return to their respective homes.

My purpose to-day, dear Brethren, is not to commend to you indiscriminate charity. But my aim is to set before you a special class of persons in this city, that you may help to improve their conditions, to redress their grievances and enable them to earn by their industry an honest and comfortable livelihood.

To come to the point: There is a class of persons in Baltimore and our other large cities who are employed by proprietors of large clothing establishments. Some of these workers are engaged in the stores. Others make garments in their own homes and bring them to the establishments. Many of these working men and women are compelled to toil in sweat-shops, of which there are eighteen in one section of the city, and

which are contracted in space and poorly lighted and ventilated. They are overworked and underpaid. On careful investigation, I have discovered, that after laboring for six days, ten or twelve hours a day, their weekly compensation amounts to six or eight dollars. And with this pittance they have to pay for house rent, food and clothing, and other expenses incident to family life. They are living on starving wages. The result is, that in a few years they become incapacitated for work.

There is something radically wrong in our social and economic condition, when the employer becomes suddenly rich, while the toiler, with the utmost thrift and economy, can scarcely keep the wolf from the door. Oh! how scathing is the language in which St. James rebukes these extortioners: "Behold the hire of the laborers which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth, and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the God of Sabbaoth."[1]

These toilers ask for no alms. All that they demand is to obtain living wages for the work they perform. They appeal to you and to the public for compassion and consideration. They are our own flesh and blood.

You will ask: "How can we help them? How can we redress their grievances?" You may not be able to aid them directly, but you can do so indirectly in various ways.

First—You can agitate the question. By agitation the air is stirred, the sky is cleared. Healthy discussion is provoked. You arouse public attention to a pressing grievance. You invoke popular sympathy. You remove the veil so that one half of the world can see how the other half lives.

[1] St. James v., 4.

Second—You can appeal to the conscience and humanity of the employers themselves, who may be disposed to repair a wrong when their attention is called to the situation. And surely a little reflection will enable them to realize that they will derive more substantial happiness from the contentment and gratitude of their workers than from the money which is hoarded in their safes.

Third—If they are deaf to your expostulations, you can have recourse to more drastic measures. Thank God, there are in Baltimore some clothing-house proprietors that treat their employees with justice and charity. In making your purchases, you can discriminate in favor of these establishments. You will thus exercise a moral pressure on the oppressors, by appealing to their self-interest.

Fourth—Lastly you can encourage and co-operate with an excellent society existing here and elsewhere. This society is called "The Consumer's League." It is composed of prominent ladies, zealous in works of charity, and has already accomplished a great deal in improving the condition of these oppressed toilers and in establishing happier and juster relations between them and their employers.

But perhaps you will say: Why should I concern myself about other people's affairs? I have my own business to attend to. Am I my brother's keeper? These were the words of Cain, the first murderer. What would have become of you and me, if Christ our Lord had said: "Am I My brother's keeper?" We would be groping today in the darkness of idolatry or infidelity. What would have become of society, if the Apostles had said: Are we our brothers' keepers? and if they had returned to their homes and

closed their ministry after the death of their Master? We would be deprived to-day of the priceless blessings of Christian civilization.

I say: You are, you ought to be your brother's keeper. You can not, indeed, like the Savior of the world, give sight to the blind, or hearing to the deaf, or speech to the dumb, or strength to the paralyzed limb. But you can work miracles of grace and mercy by relieving the distress of your suffering brethren. And never do you approach nearer to God than when you alleviate the sorrows of others. Never do you prove yourselves to be the children of your Heavenly Father more effectually than when you bring sunshine to hearts that were darkened by the clouds of adversity. Never do you perform a deed more like to the creative act of the Almighty than when you cause the flowers of joy and gladness to bloom in souls that were desolate and barren before. For, St. James tells us that charity is the essence of religion: "Religion pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one's self unspotted from this world." [1]

[1] James i., 27.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

WHY WE SHOULD REJOICE.

PHIL. IV., 4-7.

A JOYOUS disposition amid the vicissitudes of daily life, I regard as the highest form of Christian philosophy. The cheerfulness which I have in mind, is the fruit of innocence and charity, and therefore to enjoy this gift we must have a pure heart before God, and the milk of human kindness for our fellow-beings. This cheerfulness does not consist in fitful transports, but in an habitual serenity of mind. It does not usually explode in loud laughter and boisterous mirth. It is not a sudden flash which is rapidly extinguished. It is rather a steady flame flowing from a heart that is filled with the fire of the Holy Ghost.

The cheerful man is not much disturbed by the changes and accidents of daily life. He rides upon the storm. He rises superior to adversity. He is borne on the wings of hope and love. But the man of a gloomy and fretful temperament is oppressed by the burden of life, and sinks under it.

The cheerful man not only has sunshine in his own heart, but he diffuses it around him. When he enters a room, the company feel the warmth of his presence, and their hearts expand with pleasure. He exercises on their spirits the same influence that the electric lights, when they are turned on in this cathedral, produce upon your senses. The gloomy man, on the contrary, repels

them, and casts a dark shadow over them. O my Brethren, what is wealth or honor to man! What is a kingdom to him, if the kingdom of his soul is dark and desolate, and overshadowed by the clouds of sadness and despair! What was the pomp and splendor of Herod's court; what was the sound of revelry and the most delicious music to him, when there was no responsive melody in his soul! What were the bewitching smiles and graceful figures that glided through the dancing hall! What was the sumptuous banquet when his heart sickened at the contemplation of his incestuous marriage, and of the innocent blood of the Baptist which he had shed! How true are the words of the Prophet: "The wicked are like the raging sea which can not rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire. There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." [1]

What should be the basis of our joy? The foundation of our gladness of heart should not rest on our temporal possessions. I am far, indeed, from decrying the legitimate acquisition of wealth. For if judiciously employed, it contributes to the alleviation of human misery. But what is not lasting, can not bestow the fulness of satisfaction. We have a very uncertain tenure of our riches. They may take wings and fly from us. We will certainly part with our wealth at the hour of death. "O death," says the wise man, "how bitter art thou to a man that hath peace in his possessions!"

Nor should our happiness rest on the power we may exert, nor on the exalted place we may fill, nor on the honors conferred upon us, no matter how well merited they may be, or how sincerely they may be bestowed. The disciples returned to

[1] Isaiah lvii.

our Savior full of joy and complacency after their first mission, because they had wrought miracles. Our Savior admonished them not to take complacency in a power that was only delegated to them: "Rejoice not in this that spirits are subject unto you. But rejoice in this that your names are written in Heaven."[1] O how capricious and treacherous is human applause, as we see from daily examples! A few years ago J. G. Blaine was, perhaps, the most popular citizen in the United States. He was called by his admiring friends "the plumed knight." He drew thousands to him by his personal magnetism. He almost became President, and would have obtained the coveted prize were it not for the ill-timed speech of a fanatical preacher. His name to-day is well-nigh forgotten. His memory arouses no enthusiasm, and I do not know whether there is a monument over his grave. He himself became profoundly impressed with the vanity of earthly glory. On the occasion of a visit to me shortly after his defeat, he enumerated on his fingers the names of Presidents who were weighed down by the cares of state, or whose public careers were suddenly cut short by death.

Do not make the pleasures of life the subject of your delight, for some of those pleasures are base and shameful, and they are all of brief duration. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Our glory as citizens of God's kingdom on earth, does not consist in the pleasures of the table, but in the God-given grace of the Holy Ghost. Solomon possessed all these temporal advantages of which I have spoken. He ruled a kingdom, and no pleasure that his heart desired, was denied

[1] Luke x.

him. Yet he has left us the solemn verdict, that "all is vanity and affliction of spirit."

What, then, should be the basis of our joy? What is the oil which should feed this blessed lamp of cheerfulness? St. Paul tells us when he says: "Rejoice in the Lord." We should rejoice because we can look up to Heaven, and claim as our Father the Creator of the universe. We should be glad of heart, because we are the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ by adoption, that we were redeemed by His precious blood. We should rejoice in the possession of Christian faith, by which we are delivered from the darkness of error into the admirable light of the Gospel, and that we are rescued from the bondage of corruption to enjoy the glorious liberty of children of God. We should be filled with alacrity that we are temples of the Holy Ghost. We should rejoice that we are heirs prospective of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that "the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." We should be filled with delight by the thought that one day we shall enter into our eternal rest when "God shall wipe away all tears from (our) eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[1]

When St. Anthony had received a letter jointly written by the Emperor Constantine and his sons, Constantius and Constans, his disciples were filled with exultation at the honor conferred upon their venerable father. But Anthony made this remark to them: "You are elated because the Emperor has written to me. Should you not rejoice much

[1] Apoc. xxi.

more that God hath written and spoken to us by His Son, and made known to us our dignity in becoming partakers of the divine nature!" A stranger could distinguish St. Anthony from his brethren by the joy radiating from his countenance.

What intensifies this spiritual joy is the reflection that no man and no earthly power can rob you of this happiness which awaits you. You may lose health and wealth, and place and power; you may be incapable of relishing earthly pleasures, but no one can wrest from you, against your will, the interior delights of the heart.

Another feature of this alacrity of soul is that it is not reserved for a few or for a particular class of persons, but you all may participate in it, no matter what may be your condition of life. This is a remark of St. Leo. You that are young should be lightsome of heart, because your innocence renders you dearer to God. You that are old should rejoice, because you are nearer to the palm of victory. You that are in a state of righteousness, should be gladsome, because you are more conformable to the standard of Christ. You that are sinners should rejoice, because you are invited to pardon. You that are wealthy may rejoice, because, like Zacheus, you may make your riches subservient to the comfort of others, as well as to your own sanctification. You that are poor should be gladsome, because you imitate your Master who, being rich, became poor for our sakes, that by His poverty we might be enriched.

And if we rejoice in all these blessings I have enumerated, we ought certainly to rejoice in everything that contributes to obtain or enhance them. We should, therefore, take delight in labors and sufferings, in trials and tribulations, in cal-

umnies and reproaches, in humiliations and contradictions which are endured for the sake of Christ, or fall in the line of our Christian duties.

No one surely knew so well as our Savior what is the basis of solid happiness. For He who made our heart is alone capable of filling it with true delight. Now He declares: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all that is evil against you untruly, for My sake. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is very great in Heaven." [1]

Shortly before His death, our Lord delivered a long discourse to His disciples, in which He revealed to them the hard life they would have to lead, and the trials they would have to endure. But He told them that they would find in these very trials a legacy of spiritual joy: "These things have I spoken to you that my joy may be in you and your joy may be filled." [2]

After our Savior's crucifixion, the Apostles preached in the streets of Jerusalem. They were arrested by the high priests and scourged in the council chamber, and forbidden to speak of the name of Jesus. The "Apostles went forth from the council chamber rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." Now there is nothing pleasing to the senses in enduring the strokes of a scourge. The Apostles rejoiced in the pains and humiliations they suffered, because they contributed to their greater glory in Heaven.

If we study the life of St. Paul, we will find that the dominant note in his character was joy of spirit amid sufferings. His apostolic ministry

[1] Matt. v. [2] John xv.

was a continuous scene of privations and hardships. In one of his epistles, he thus describes his trials: "Five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I spent in the depths of the sea. In journeyings often. In perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles; in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils from false brethren. In labors and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness."

Yet, notwithstanding all these sufferings, or rather because of them, the heart of Paul was habitually joyous, for he knew that every stripe and every trial would be put to his account on the Lord's day.

"I rejoice," he says, "with exceeding great joy in the midst of my tribulations. I am as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as needy, yet enriching many, as having nothing, yet possessing all things." Again he says: "We rejoice not only in the hope of the glory of the sons of God, but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not, for the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given us."[1] Here is a golden stairway ascending, like Jacob's ladder, from earth to Heaven. The first step, which is tribulation, rests on the earth, and the last step, which is hope, reaches to Heaven. Let us, like the Apostle, joyfully ascend this heavenly stairway. From tribulation let us ascend to patience; from patience let us mount up to trial or approval; from approval, to hope, and from hope,

[1] Rom. v.

let us ascend in spirit to the kingdom of Heaven: "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also, heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

And now let me offer you in conclusion a few practical suggestions. First of all, endeavor to establish the reign of joy and sunshine in your own heart. To accomplish this blessed result, three conditions are necessary. 1st. You must have a pure and upright conscience before God. 2d. You must maintain an habitual spirit of benevolence towards your fellowman; for you can not have serenity in your heart so long as it is clouded by resentment towards your neighbor. 3d. Keep yourself free from inordinate attachment to anything earthly; for you can not soar heavenward so long as your wings are clogged by the bird lime of carnal passions.

Once you have planted the blessings of joy within you, let its beams radiate throughout your household. Let the husband be a source of joy to his wife, and the wife to her husband. Do not permit the clouds of gloom and melancholy to gather on your brow. Let the children be as lesser lights in the domestic firmament, diffusing the rays of sunshine on their parents. No matter what may be the storms you may encounter in the ocean of business cares, do not let them invade the harbor of your homes. Be cheerful at your meals; cheerfulness is a good digester. A gloomy temper produces dyspepsia. Imitate the primitive Christians "who took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart." [1]

Above all, worship the Lord with gladness of heart; for God loveth a cheerful giver. He wishes

[1] Acts ii.

to be served, not with the sullenness, gloom and reluctance of a slave or a hireling, but with the alacrity of a son. Come to the house of God on the Lord's day, not as to a place of mourning, but as to the bright home of your Father. Be animated with the sentiments of the Royal Prophet, when he exclaimed: "I will go to the altar of God, to God who rejoiceth my youth." If the house of God is associated with feelings of joy in our innocent childhood, why not in the days of our erring and sinning manhood as well? Is He not the Father of the transgressor as well as of the righteous? And has not the prodigal more need of the shelter and refreshment of his Father's home, than the unoffending son?

See how gladly our college students lay aside their books and how eagerly they hasten home to spend the holidays under the paternal roof. How joyfully they relate to their parents their labors and success in their studies. With what pleasure they commingle with the members of the household, and with what relish they sit down to partake of the family meal.

So do you, on the return of each weekly holiday, dismiss from your mind your business cares. Lift yourselves up from the turbulent sea of this world to the contemplation of higher and holier scenes. Come with joyful eagerness to your Father's house. Lay before Him all your wants and pious aspirations. Listen to His comforting voice, and partake betimes of the heavenly banquet. Welcome every Sunday in the words which the Church universal applies to Easter day, and say: "This is the day which the Lord made. Let us be glad and rejoice therein." [1]

[1] Ps. cxvii.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

JESUS CHRIST OUR FRIEND.

LUKE III., 1-6.

THE name of John the Baptist figures prominently in the Gospels appointed to be read on the last three Sundays of Advent.

There was no man in his time on whom our Lord pronounced so many eulogies as on the great Precursor. He calls him "a Prophet, yea, and more than a Prophet;" and "a burning and shining light;" and He declares that "among those born of women, there is not a greater Prophet than John the Baptist."

But among the encomiums bestowed upon John by his Master, there is none so tender and endearing as the title of "The Friend of the Bridegroom." The nearer we approach in personal righteousness and devotion to John, the more we can share with him in this beautiful appellation.

Among the blessings and enjoyments of this life, there are few that can be compared in value to the possession of a faithful friend, who will pour the truth into your heart, though you may wince under it,—of a friend who will defend you when you are unjustly assailed by the tongue of calumny, who will not forsake you when you have fallen into disgrace, who will counsel you in your doubts and perplexities, who will open his purse to aid you without expecting any return of his favors, who will rejoice at your prosperity and grieve at your adversity, who will bear half of

your burden,—who will add to your joys and diminish your sorrows by sharing in both.

The Holy Scriptures, in the following passage, describes the value of a loyal friend: "A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he who hath found him hath found a treasure. Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend, and no weight of gold and silver is able to countervail the goodness of his fidelity. A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality, and they that fear the Lord shall find him."[1]

"A faithful friend is a strong defence." When you are openly or secretly assailed by an enemy, or when any danger threatens you, your friend will rush to your aid, regardless of personal danger. He will make your cause his own. A beautiful example of this quality of friendship is furnished in the Book of Kings. So close was the friendship between Jonathan and David, that as the Sacred Text expresses it, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David." When the enmity of Saul was aroused against David, and when he resolved through envy to slay him, Jonathan, his sterling friend, hastened to apprize David of the danger which threatened him, and to hide him in a place of security. He then so eloquently pleaded before his father the innocence of his friend, that Saul promised to be reconciled to David. When Jonathan was slain in battle, David rent his garments and fasted till evening, and he exclaimed: "As a mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee."

"He that hath found a friend, hath found a treasure." A poor man may be said to be rich in the midst of his poverty, so long as he enjoys the interior sunshine of a devoted friend. The

[1] Eccles. vi., 16.

wealthiest of men, on the contrary, is poor and miserable, if he has no friend whom he can grasp by the hand, and to whom he can disclose the secrets of his heart.

Ancient history informs us that while Dionysius, the Tyrant, was king of Syracuse, there dwelt in that city two men named Damon and Pythias, who were bound to each other by the closest ties of friendship. Pythias was sentenced to death by the tyrant, but he obtained some days' leave of absence, that he might settle his affairs in his own country. Damon volunteered to remain as a hostage in prison until his friend's return. The day of execution was drawing near, and when Dionysius and his court, who were strangers to the heroism of true friendship, saw that Pythias had not returned, they concluded that he had betrayed his friend. But on the day appointed for execution, he presented himself. Dionysius admiring so sublime a manifestation of friendship, pardoned the condemned man. And he is said to have exclaimed: Though I abound in riches, and am surrounded by a retinue of courtiers, how poor am I, since I have not a loyal friend in whom I can confide; while both of you, in the midst of your poverty, enjoy the wealth of each other's society!

Jesus Christ is presented to us in the Gospel under the sweet and attractive title of Friend: "I will not now," He says, "call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth. But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you."

But you may say to me: These words of Christ are addressed not to us sinners, but to the Apostles. That is true. But for your comfort, I can

say to you that Jesus is called in the Gospel "the Friend of sinners." And did not His enemies reproach Him because He associated with publicans and sinners? Therefore, though we are sinners, or rather because we are sinners, He is our Friend, for He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Friendship has certain essential characteristics without which it is unworthy of the name. The basis of true friendship are self-sacrifice, disinterestedness, truth, virtue and constancy. It is commonly said that "there is honor even among thieves." But there can be no honor where the aims and pursuits of life are vicious.

You may have friends who possess these qualities of friendship, but Jesus Christ alone possesses them all in a perfect degree.

First—No man has ever made so great *sacrifices* for a friend as Christ has made for us: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Jesus has done more than this for us. When we were His enemies, He made us His friends, and then He surrendered His life for us. He has shown a stronger and more disinterested friendship for us than Damon has shown for Pythias, or than Jonathan has shown for David. Like Damon, He has become a prisoner and a hostage for us, that we might enjoy the liberty of the children of God. But more than Damon, He has died that we might live. He has laid down His life for His friends. Like Jonathan, He has pleaded our cause before His Father. But greater than Jonathan, He has become the Victim of His Father's justice, that we might escape His Father's vengeance.

Second—Where will you find a friendship so *disinterested* as that of Jesus Christ? In acquiring

your friendship, He has nothing to gain. In being deprived of your friendship, He has nothing to lose. You are all the gainers in enjoying His blessed society. You are all the losers when it is withdrawn from you. You come to Him empty-handed, or if you have any gift to offer Him, it is the fruit of His bounty. He comes to you laden with gifts. He brings to you joy and interior sunshine. He brings you peace and tranquility of heart. The words which He spoke to you in the Gospel linger in your memory like some delicious fragrance. And yet, how little remorse we experience in losing the friendship of Jesus! If through our own fault we are separated from the society of a friend, we are dejected and inconsolable, but if we lose the friendship of Jesus through mortal sin, we are in a state of stupid indifference, though in parting with Him we are deprived of a treasure which the world can not purchase.

Third—The friendship of Jesus is *constant and persevering.* No matter how strong and tender may be the ties of friendship that bind you to others, those friends will be withdrawn from you by force of circumstances, or they may abandon you through infidelity, or be removed by death. But no power on earth can separate you from the friendship of Jesus, against your will. If you lose His friendship, it will be through your own fault. He will be the last to leave you and the first to be reconciled to you. In order to be restored to His friendship, you have only to enter the secret chamber of your heart, and invite Him thither by humble prayer, and He will presently be with you, as He was with the two disciples going to Emmaus, and you will feel the joy of His presence as they did when they exclaimed: "Was not our heart burning within us while He spoke in the way?"

He will be always with you. You may enjoy His company day and night, alone and in public, in life and in death. He will be the last to say farewell to you on earth, and the first to greet you in Heaven. And how consoling it is to have Him with you! "When Jesus is present," says à Kempis, "all is well, and nothing seems difficult. When Jesus is absent, everything is hard. To be without Jesus is a grievous hell; to be with Jesus, is a sweet paradise."

It is essential to true friendship that it be reciprocal. A one-sided attachment can never be called friendship. In the judgment of mankind, there is no crime so base as ingratitude towards a friend. Our Savior bore in silence the injuries and insults offered to Him during His passion. There was one offence which extorted from Him the expression of painful emotion, and that was the treachery of Judas, whom He had associated among His special friends: "Judas," He exclaimed, "dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?"

It goes without saying that you should love your Divine Friend as He has loved you. You should love Him more than any earthly creature, because His love for you surpasses that of any human being. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Your love should not be sentimental or expressed in mere words. It should be real and substantial. You should be ready to suffer with your Lord and for Him, for sacrifice is the strongest test of love.

Our Lord sets before us an excellent criterion by which we can judge whether we are His friends. "Ye are My friends," He says, "if ye do the things which I have commanded you." The fulfillment of the *divine precepts* is a proof of our

friendship with Christ. This is an easy and a practical test. The laws of human friendship require that you say and do nothing which would give unnecessary pain to a friend. Surely divine friendship will not be satisfied with less. Be as careful, therefore, not to wound the sensitive heart of your heavenly Friend, as you would be not to wound the feelings of an earthly companion.

You have another tangible way of testifying your friendship for Jesus, and that is by loving your neighbor for Jesus' sake: "This is My Commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." And among your brethren, He singles out in a particular manner the victims of sorrow and misfortune. Let me suppose that you received a letter from a very dear friend residing in a foreign country,—a friend to whom you were deeply indebted for past favors. This letter was handed to you by his brother, and was couched in the following terms: "My esteemed Friend: This letter will be presented to you by my affectionate brother who is now in great distress. I entreat you by our long friendship to render to him all the assistance in your power, and I shall consider the favor you may confer on him as bestowed on myself, and rest assured that in good time you will be amply requited by me for your timely aid to him." If you were the recipient of a letter of this kind, how eagerly you would seize the opportunity to reciprocate the generosity of your friend in assisting his brother!

Now Jesus Christ sends each of you such an epistle. For, is not the Gospel a letter communicated to you by your divine friend in Heaven? Does He not there call every man His brother? And does He not tell you that He will regard any favor done to a brother in distress, as done to

Himself? Does He not promise to recompense you a thousandfold for the services you will render him? Hear His words: "Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For, I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat, thirsty, and ye gave Me to drink, naked, and ye clothed Me, sick, and ye visited Me. . . For, as long as ye did it to one of the least of My brethren, ye did it to Me."

You have still another duty of friendship to your Divine Lord. It is the cherished custom of friends to meet together, to converse with one another, and to eat and drink at the same table. Those frequent reunions tend to nourish and foster the bonds of fellowship. Now, my Brethren, you have daily opportunities of engaging in familiar conversation with Jesus by prayer and meditation. You may eat and sup with Him by approaching the banquet of the Eucharist. "Behold," He says, "if any man shall hear My voice, and open the door to Me, I will come to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." [1]

You envy, perhaps, those privileged souls who enjoyed the society of Jesus during His mortal life. You envy Magdalen, who embraced His sacred feet, who washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You envy Zacheus, who had the happiness of receiving our Lord in his house, and bestowing hospitality on Him. Above all, you envy the Apostles,—the intimate friends of Jesus, who were His daily companions, and who at the Last Supper partook of His body and blood as a special token of friendship.

But envy them not, for you may enjoy all the privileges which those persons possessed. Like Magdalen, you can wash the feet of Jesus, and

[1] Apoc. iii., 20.

embrace them in spirit by a holy compunction for your sins. Like Zacheus you can entertain our Savior in the sanctuary of your soul. "If any man love Me, he will be loved by My Father, and we will come to make our abode with him." And, lastly, like the Apostles, you may sit at table with Jesus and partake of the new Passover Feast which He has prepared for you.

The friendship of Jesus ennobles and sanctfies human friendship. It elevates it to a higher plane. It is the bond which strengthens it and makes it lasting. You will never be disloyal to a friend, so long as you are loyal to Christ. If the spirit of Jesus presides at the festive board, He will season your meat and conversation with the salt of wisdom and will cheer them with the wine of sober joy. If friendships impart so much pleasure in this life where they are, unfortunately, short-lived, what must be the delight of social unions in Heaven, where they are never broken by death or estrangement! O blessed friendships founded on virtue and religion, which begin with time and endure through eternity! O blessed friendships which have their roots on earth, which bloom in Heaven, whose fruits ripen in the everlasting years! O wished-for day when old friendships will be renewed, and numberless new alliances will be formed!

If the bare perusal of the lives of men and women, conspicuous for heroic virtue, and living in ages and countries remote from our own; if even the contemplation of their portraits elicits so much loving admiration, what will be the bliss in seeing them face to face, and sharing in their indissoluble love!

If Jonathan and David derived so much satisfaction from those secret and stolen interviews,

when they tried to elude the vigilance of a jealous king, what will be the delight of friends in Heaven, whose attachments will meet with the approving smile of the great King who will say to His followers: "I will no more call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth; but I have called you friends, because all things whatever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you," and the glory which I have from My Father I will share with you for all eternity.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

JOHN I. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

SINCE, by the gracious bounty of our Lord, we are to celebrate Mass thrice to-day, we can not make any extended remarks on the Gospel lesson. Thus spoke Gregory the Great at the close of the sixth century.

Dearly beloved brethren: It is a striking evidence of the unvarying character of the Liturgy of the Church that I have to offer you this morning the same reason which Gregory gave more than thirteen hundred years ago for the brevity of my remarks. Of all the festival days in the year, Christmas is always the brightest and most gladsome. Though there be cold in the air, and frost and snow under our feet, there is always warm sunshine in our hearts.

Thanksgiving Day, though it is annually heralded by the Proclamation of the President and the Governors of States, is commemorated only by those who live under the American flag and by our fellow-citizens sojourning in foreign parts.

But Christmas is a world-wide festivity, in which every Christian nation of the earth participates. Though unannounced by civic proclamations, it is forgotten by no one. It is eagerly expected by all; it is heartily enjoyed while it lasts, and leaves after it sweet religious memories. It returns every year as fresh and fragrant as the new-born flowers of spring.

Our forefathers in the faith worshipped the Infant Savior nineteen centuries ago, and we wor-

ship Him with unflagging devotion to-day. Christmas is always popular. "Ever ancient and ever new," time writes no wrinkles on the heavenly brow of this annual visitor.

The young rejoice to-day. This is pre-eminently the feast of holy childhood, which is consecrated by our Savior's birth. They welcome the day with gleesome hearts. They see in their father's face a brighter smile, and their mother's embrace seems to them more tender than usual.

The aged couple grow young again, and share in the innocent sports and mirth of the little ones. The Spirit of Jesus who has said: "Behold I make all things new" quickens them with new life, makes them feel again as children, and gives them a foretaste of the perennial youth reserved for them hereafter. And the poor man rejoices to-day. And why not? Of all days in the year, does he not feel this morning the dignity of his Christian equality, as he enters the House of God? Does he not realize that as the humble shepherds were as welcome to the crib of Bethlehem as were the Princes from the East, so is he not as welcome as the rich man to kneel before the altar and to partake of the banquet of the Lord?

The benevolent rich man rejoices during this holy season. His soul expands and is enlarged under the genial influence of heaven-born charity. He enjoys that sweetest and most rational pleasure of contributing by his bounty to the happiness of others. And he is rewarded for his generosity by the prayers and gratitude of the recipients of his favors. And thus is established a happy interchange of goods between the rich and the poor.

The pilgrim and wanderer is gladdened to-day, though far away from the parental roof. He medi-

tates on the scenes of his childhood, and revisits the altars of his youth. Yielding to some sacred impulse, gentle but powerful, he is drawn this morning to the Church he had long forsaken. He must hear Mass on Christmas Day, though he neglected that duty for three hundred and sixty-four days of the year. He says in his heart with the Psalmist: "I will go to the altar of God, to God who rejoiceth my youth." Has not this sacred inspiration drawn some of you hither to-day? God grant that the good spirit that animates you this morning, may abide with you forever. May Jesus born in your souls grow there unto a perfect man!

Above all, Christmas-tide is a season of family reunion. The sons and brothers scattered far and wide, are eager to meet again in their childhood's home and to renew the cherished affections of early days. They love to hear their father's and mother's and sister's voice, and to partake with them of the family meal, and to relate their varied struggles in the tumultuous sea of life. And they return to their respective pursuits refreshed and fortified by the endearing memories of domestic ties.

But who is it that gladdens to-day the hearts of young and old, of rich and poor, and of pilgrim, and that knits again the bonds of family love? All are warmed by the rays that emanate from the Babe of Bethlehem. The Festival of Christmas is only to be recalled to mind in order to fill us with mingled sentiments of joy and exultation, of love and gratitude. It is a mystery more suggestive of silent meditation than of noise of words. For what is the mystery we celebrate? Let me briefly announce it.

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we saw His glory, the glory, as it were,

of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

"Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal to God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant; being made to the likeness of man, and in fashion being found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. For which cause God hath also exalted Him, and hath given Him a Name, which is above all names." [1]

He who existed from all eternity, who said: "I am the first and the last, and behold I live forever and ever," He becomes an Infant born to-day.

He who feeds the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, He of whom the Psalmist writes: "All creatures expect of thee, that thou give them food in seasonable time,"—He is now reduced to the necessity of seeking food from the hands of another.

He who clothes the lily of the valley, and covers the sheep with their yearly fleece, He who decks the heavens with such beautiful tints and colors, is wrapped in swaddling clothes.

He who dwells in the highest heavens, whom the heaven of heavens can not contain; He, in whom "we live and move, and have our being," He who says of Himself: "Heaven is My throne, the earth is My footstool," He has now a stable for a dwelling, a manger for a bed-stead, a little straw for His pillow, His companions being dumb beasts.

The Author of the universe, who gave motion to the planets, who said to the sun: Run thy daily course from East to West,—He who holds in His hands the destiny of kings and emperors, now becomes for our sake, powerless and helpless.

[1] Phil. ii., 9.

But let us not for a moment lose sight of the true nature of this homeless, poverty-stricken Infant. Though a Child of a day old, we adore Him as our eternal God. He is "God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, consubstantial to His Father, by whom all things were made." Though He has taken on Himself our nature, He has contracted none of our guilt. He is like unto us in all things, sin only excepted.

On this day the Orient from on high hath visited us. He hath adopted us as His children. He hath poured out on us the riches of His grace and mercy. Let us also exercise charity towards the poor. It is related in the Gospel that while two of the disciples of Jesus were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus, our Lord appeared to them in the guise of a stranger. And they constrained Him to accept their hospitality. It was only after He had broken bread with them, and had vanished from their sight that they recognized Him as the Savior, and they exclaimed: "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He was speaking in the way and opening to us the Scriptures?"[1]

Jesus appears also to us in a disguised form. You will find Him at the Orphan Asylum in the guise of an orphan. You will find Him in the home of the Little Sisters in the persons of the aged poor. You will find Him in the home of an afflicted and genteel family, who are unable to work, and ashamed to beg. Help the orphan and the aged, and hide your offering in the hands of the family that shrink from public attention. Or confide your gift to the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, who will use it with judgment and discretion. And thus you will enjoy a greater privilege than Abraham possessed when

[1] Luke xxiv., 32.

he unconsciously entertained angels, for you will entertain the God of angels. Like the disciples going to Emmaus, you will minister to Jesus Christ, who has said: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of the least of My brethren, you did it to Me." [1]

In adoring the Infant Savior during these days of grace, three great models are set before you,—the angels, the shepherds, and the Magi.

Adore your Lord with the spirit of faith and profound reverence with which the angelic hosts worshipped Him when they sang the joyous anthem: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to men of good will."

Worship Him with the simple devotion of the shepherds. Hearken to the voice of duty and of conscience as promptly as the shepherds hearkened to the voice of the angels. Leave your temporal concerns, both great and small, in the hands of Providence, as the shepherds abandoned their sheep and lambs to hasten to the Shepherd of their souls. Go to Him, not only in Christmastide, but on every Sunday; for, the divine Infant spent only a few days in Bethlehem, but He abides in our churches continually.

Approach your Redeemer with the pious eagerness of the Magi. Offer Him spiritual gifts corresponding with the gold, frankincense and myrrh of the Magi. Present to Him the gold of a loving heart, the myrrh of an humble and contrite spirit and the incense of fervent prayer. "Come, let us adore and fall down before God. Let us weep in the presence of the Lord who made us. For, He is the Lord our God, and we are His people, and the sheep of His fold." [2]

[1] Matt. xxv., 40. [2] Ps. xciv., 6.7.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

LUKE II., 21. "His name was called Jesus."

THE Jewish people were accustomed to name their male children at the time of their circumcision. From them Christians have borrowed the custom of giving names to their offspring at their baptism, of which Sacrament Circumcision was the shadow and the figure.

Eight days after His birth, our Savior, in compliance with the Mosaic law, was circumcised, on which occasion He received the adorable name of Jesus, in honor of which this day's festival has been established.

I feel, O Lord, unworthy to pronounce this Thy sacred name,—a name which is worthy of angelic adoration, which is terrible to demons, a name which no one, says St. Paul, can utter with due respect, unless inspired by the Holy Ghost. "Cleanse my heart and my lips, as Thou didst cleanse the lips of the Prophet Isaiah with a burning coal," that I may with becoming reverence speak of the virtue and dignity of Thy saving name.

The regard which we entertain for a man's title is regulated by the dignity of the source from which it is derived, the eminent qualities it expresses, and by the fidelity with which the bearer of the title illustrates those qualities by his life and actions.

The name of Jesus comes from the highest authority. It was not given to Him by Joseph or by Mary, or even by the Archangel Gabriel, but it was conferred by the Eternal Father Himself. For the Angel was the bearer of a message from

God, when he announced to Mary that she should call His name Jesus. And, indeed, it was most proper that this name should be given by the Most High. For as none but God had an adequate conception of the mighty works our Savior was destined to perform, so none but God was capable of bestowing on Him a designation corresponding with His divine mission to mankind.

The name of Jesus signifies Savior, or salvation. It embodies in one word all that is good and merciful, all that is noble and exalted. It is the sweet concentrated essence of all the flowers of Paradise, enriching the earth by its fragrance. It is a fruit most delicious to the spiritual taste. It is a precious compound containing every medicinal ingredient for the healing and comfort of the human heart. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Earthly monarchs and generals sometimes receive high-sounding titles. But they are, for the most part, empty sounds adopted to gratify a spirit of vanity and ostentation.

England had a sovereign who was called the *Good Queen Anne.* Yet Agnes Strickland, her biographer, says that from her youth upward she had been double-minded, and that she set a price on her brother's head.

Greece gloried in an Alexander the *Great.* But his death was said to have been caused by a protracted indulgence in debauchery and intemperance.

France also boasts of a Louis the *Great.* And if mighty conquests, the fear of his enemies and the admiration of his subjects could make him great, he had some claim to that title. But to his great powers were added great vices, and he was conquered by death. After his demise, his re-

mains were borne to a church, and Massillon, Bishop of Clermont, was selected to preach his funeral oration. Looking down from the pulpit on the mouldering remains of a sovereign before whose name Europe once trembled, the venerable prelate, impressed with the nothingness of earthly titles, opened his discourse with the appropriate words: "God alone is great!"

The most suitable monument to be erected to many conquerors with high-sounding titles would be constructed of human bones cemented with human blood.

Our own Washington has received the more engaging title of the Father and the Savior of his Country, and if, indeed, any ruler ever deserved that appellation, it was eminently due to him who had displayed so much valor and wisdom in war, and disinterestedness in time of peace. But how these claims dwindle into insignificance when compared with those of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Washington rescued his country from the yoke of a foreign power. Our Blessed Lord has saved us from the more galling servitude of our passions, and from the bondage of sin. The blessings of Washington's victory are reaped by one nation, — the American people. The salvation wrought by Jesus Christ is enjoyed by representatives of every tribe and tongue, and nation and people on the face of the earth, for "from the rising of the sun, even to the going down, His name is great among the Gentiles, and there is offered to His name a clean oblation." [1]

The fruit of Washington's victory may yet be forfeited to generations to come by the treachery or ambition of mercenary and designing men!

[1] Mal. 1., 11.

(May God avert such a calamity!) But the victory achieved by our divine Head has its root in Calvary, with its branches extending over the face of the earth, bearing upon them perennial fruits of salvation.

Truly, then, can we say that Jesus is not "the shadow of a mighty name," nor an empty sound, but a title which He has purchased by the loving service of His whole life, and by the shedding of His blood. For, "Jesus," says St. Paul, "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father." [1]

The name of Jesus was a shield of strength to the Apostles, and their rallying cry in all their perilous ministry. Our blessed Lord told His Apostles that His name would be the golden key which would unlock for them the treasures of Heaven. "Whatsoever," He declares, "you shall ask in My name, it shall be given unto you." My disciples, He says, "in My name, shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues, they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." [2] And this prediction of our Savior was literally fulfilled.

The Apostles went forth with confidence. The only credentials they bore with them was the name of Jesus. Invoking this name, they gave sight to the blind, health to the sick, and strength to the paralyzed arm, and even life to the dead.

Peter and John, shortly after the crucifixion of

[1] Phil. ii., 8-11. [2] Mark xvi., 18.

our Lord, were going one day to the temple to pray, and at the gate of the temple they met a man, lame from his birth, who asked alms of them. Peter said to him: "Silver and gold I have not, but what I have I give unto thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk. And taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and his soles became firm." Just as a servant obeys the command of his master, nature yields obedience to nature's God, and the very name of Jesus puts the disease to flight.

The report of this miracle soon spread through the city, for the man who was healed of his lameness had been generally known to the people, having been a public beggar. The high priest and others who had conspired to put our Savior to death, hear also of the prodigy, not with joy but dismay. They order the Apostles to be imprisoned, and demand of them by what power they have wrought such a miracle. Peter, inspired by the Holy Ghost, boldly answers them: "Be it known," He says, "to you and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified . . . even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other. For, there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved."[1] Like murderers who tremble with fear when the name of their victim is mentioned before them, these wicked Jews were disconcerted at the announcement of the name of Him whom they had put to death, and, therefore, they charged the Apostles not to preach the name of Jesus. But the Apostles replied that they must obey God rather than man.

[1] Acts iv., 10-12.

It was this sacred and venerable name which gave strength and fortitude to the martyrs, which enabled them to bear with patience the rack and other instruments of torture. This hallowed name infused a secret joy into their hearts, and inspired them with courage to preach Christ crucified to their torturers.

It is in this name of Jesus that the Church exercises her ministry for you. In this name you were baptized, in this name the chrism was marked on your foreheads in Confirmation. It is in this name that your sins are washed away in the sacred tribunal of Penance. In this name you will be anointed in your last illness. And when your soul is about to leave its earthly tenement, the minister of God commands it in the name of Jesus to speed its flight to a happier world. "Go forth," he says, "from this world, O Christian soul, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for thee, in the name of the Holy Ghost, who was poured out on thee." In fine, the Church concludes all her prayers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I need not tell you, my Brethren, that it is in the name of Jesus that I appear before you. Woe to me if I should address you under the sanction of any other name. Woe to me, should I present to you my own views and speculations. Then I would be trespassing upon your time. I would be as "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." But when I exhort you to virtue, to chastity, to patience, to charity and justice, my words are clothed with authority, because they are spoken in the name of Jesus. That name gives force to my words. I shelter myself behind it as an im-

pregnable rampart. I stand upon it as on a rock. I lean upon it as upon an immovable column.

You have heard of the supernatural power and salutary influence which the name of Jesus exercises in the ministry of the Church. Is it not your desire that this hallowed name should be also to you a symbol of strength and salvation? I do not doubt your reply.

Let me exhort you, then, to have this name frequently in your heart and on your lips. Let it often sound in your ears. Let it be invoked in your daily actions.

We may appropriately apply to the name of Jesus the earnest words in which Moses admonishes the people of Israel to observe the precepts of the Decalogue. "This holy name which I commend to thee this day, shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt tell it to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon it sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind it as a sign on thy hand, and thou shalt write it in the entry and on the doors of thy house." [1]

I do not ask you, indeed, to inscribe that name in cold type on your door. Such a display would savor of pharisaical formalism and ostentation. But let this name, with all the virtues it implies, shine so luminously in the kingdom of God within you, that it may exert a sovereign empire over you and the members of your household.

Our Lord said of St. Paul, that ardent lover of Jesus: "He is a vessel of election to Me to carry My name to the Gentiles." [2] That Apostle could hardly write a sentence without mentioning the name of Jesus. That name was deeply impressed on his heart, and was, therefore, often expressed

[1] Deut. vi., 8-9. [2] Acts ix., 15.

by his lips and his pen. "From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh." Those who are familiar with his epistles can not fail to notice how often the name of Jesus occurs in those sacred pages. On opening his epistles at random, I discovered the name of Jesus nine times in ten short verses. If we cherished that name like St. Paul, it would spontaneously gush from our lips, and flow from the point of our pen.

"The name of Jesus," says St. Bernard, "is honey to the mouth, music to the ear, and gladness to the heart." This name, piously invoked, is an infallible salve to heal the complex wounds of the human heart. For, as Jesus by the sound of His voice, was capable of calming the seas and tempests while He lived on earth, so will the pious invocation of His name quell the tumults of passion which rage within our soul. Call upon that name in temptations, and you may be confident of his protection. For, as the Scripture says: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

The names of Alexander the Great, of Caesar and Napoleon inspired the soldiers of those generals with indomitable energy. Soldiers of Christ, call upon that name, and it will be to you a tower of strength against the face of the enemy. Let this name be your battle cry, and then "though you walk in the midst of the shadow of death, you shall fear no evils, for He is with you."

Seek Jesus also in your books. St. Augustin tells us that he used to read with much relish a certain work of Cicero's on the pursuit of virtue. "The book," he says, "though written by a pagan, pleased me very much. There was only one thing that I disliked in it,—the name of Jesus was not found in it. That name, O Lord," (cries out the

Saint), "which I was taught tenderly to revere, and which I imbibed with my mother's milk."

Parents, let this be the first name you will teach your children; let it be the first which their lisping tongues will utter.

Love to hear others speak that name, and listen to it with joy. Always speak of that name with profound reverence. We sometimes, alas! hear it in the streets spoken, not with awe, but with levity, not to edify, but to scandalize, not in love, but in hatred, not in praise, but in blasphemy.

Atone as far as you can for this impiety by always uttering this venerable name with profound reverence and love.

Let all your actions be undertaken in the name of Jesus. Thus advises St. Paul: "Whatsoever ye do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him."[1] With this inspired Prophet I would say to you: "Young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord, because His name alone is exalted above all the heavens."[2] "Sing to the Lord, and bless His name, proclaim His salvation from day to day."[3] May it be a name full of consolation to you in life, a name full of hope at the hour of your death, may it be your passport to the kingdom of Heaven.

[1] Col. iii., 17. [2] Ps. cxlviii., 12. [3] Ps. xcv., 2.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE MISSION OF CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

LUKE II., 42-52.

THE love and solicitude of Mary and Joseph for the Child Jesus is expressed in these words: "Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." And the filial obedience of the Son is made manifest in this short sentence: "He was subject to them."

The three characters mentioned in this day's Gospel have been in every age and country the models of the Christian family.

How sublime is the office entrusted to these blessed consorts! They are appointed the guides and companions of the Incarnate Savior and His visible guardian angels. How sacredly is this duty fulfilled! "Jesus was subject to them." He obeyed their behests. He followed their counsels. Now we are sure that Joseph and Mary did not sin in commanding, as Jesus could not transgress in obeying.

My remarks to-day have a special application to you, fathers and mothers! You have a mission assigned to you only less honorable than that of Joseph and Mary. Are not your offspring the children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, redeemed by His blood, and are you not appointed by Heaven their first apostles and teachers, and their visible guardian angels? It rests with you whether you are to be to them angels of light or angels of darkness, ministers of salvation or of destruction.

The home is the primeval school. It is the best, the most hallowed, and the most potential of all academies; and the parent, especially the mother, is the first, the most influential, and the most cherished of all teachers.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, is established in most of our large cities. When the mission of this Society is carried on with discretion, and kept within legitimate bounds, when, for instance, it withdraws the child from the poisonous influences of vicious, cruel and scandalous parents, it is accomplishing beneficent results, and is conferring a benefit on society.

But when it arbitrarily steps in between the child and parental authority, when it summons parents before the civil tribunal for chastising refractory children, which the Scripture warrants, it usurps a power which no human law can justly sanction, and it invades the God-given domain of parental control.

But if no human ordinance can abrogate or annul the divine *right* of parents to rule their household, neither can any vicarious instruction given in the day-school or Sunday-school exempt them from the *obligation* of a personal supervision over their offspring. If Christian training is eliminated from the home, and relegated to the class-room, the child, when emancipated from his studies, may be tempted to regard religious knowledge as a mere detail of school work, and not, as it should be, a vital principle in his daily life and conduct.

And yet, I fear there are many parents who imagine that they discharge their whole duty to their children, by placing them under the zealous care of our Catholic teachers. These instructors

may supplement and develop, but they were never intended to supplant the domestic tuition.

The education of a child should begin at its mother's knee. The mind of a child, like softened wax, receives first impressions with ease, and these impressions last the longest. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." A child is susceptible of instruction much earlier than parents commonly imagine. It has the capacity to perceive and apprehend the truth, though unable as yet to go through the process of reasoning and analysis. Mothers should watch with a jealous eye the first unfolding of the infant mind, and pour into it the seed of heavenly knowledge.

For various reasons mothers should be the first instructors of their children.

First—As nature ordains that mothers should be the first to feed their offspring with corporal nourishment of their own substance, so the God of nature ordains that mothers should be the first to impart to their little ones "the rational, guileless milk" of heavenly knowledge "whereby they may grow unto salvation." [1]

Second—The children that are fed by their own mothers are usually more healthy and robust than those that are nurtured by wet-nurses. In like manner, the children who are instructed by their own mothers in the elements of Christian knowledge, are commonly more sturdy in faith, and are more responsive to the call of moral duty, than those who are committed for instruction to strangers.

Third—The progress of a pupil in knowledge is in a great measure proportioned to the confidence he has in his preceptor. Now, in whom does a

[1] I. Peter ii., 2.

child place so much reliance as in his mother? She is his oracle and prophet. She is his guide, philosopher and friend. He never doubts what his mother tells him. The lesson he receives acquires additional force because it proceeds from one to whom he gave his first love, and whose image, in after life, is indelibly stamped on his heart and memory. Mothers, do not lose the golden opportunity you have of training your children in faith and morals while their hearts are open to drink in your every word.

Fourth—You share the same home with your children, you frequently occupy the same apartment. You eat at the same table with them. They are habitually before your eyes. You are, therefore, the best fitted to instruct them, and you can avail yourselves of every little incident that presents itself, and draw from it some appropriate moral reflection.

It is a fact worthy of record that the most distinguished personages that have adorned the Church by their apostolic virtues, or that have served their country by their patriotism, or that have shed a lustre on the home by the integrity of their private lives, were usually men who had the happiness of receiving from pious mothers early principles of moral rectitude.

Witness St. Augustin, the great Doctor of the Church in the fifth century. In his youth he had lost his faith, and with it he had lost purity of conscience. He was tainted with Manicheism, the most pernicious error of the times, and he became a prey to the fiercest passions. His saintly mother, Monica, prayed for him with a constancy which only a mother can exhibit. She hoped against hope, and before her death she had the consolation of seeing him restored to God and His

Church. St. Augustin attributes his conversion largely to his mother's prayers. In his matchless book entitled his "Confessions," he speaks of her in the most tender and filial language, and commends her soul most touchingly to the prayers of his readers.

Witness St. Louis, King of France. He owes his greatness as a monarch, and his virtues as a saint, under God, to his mother, Queen Blanche. Though occupied during her son's minority with the affairs of state, she had time to devote to his religious and moral training. "I love you tenderly," she said to her child, "but sooner would I behold you a corpse at my feet, and France bereft of an heir to the throne, than that you should tarnish your soul by a corruptible life." If Queen Blanche could pay so much attention to her son's instruction notwithstanding her engrossing administrative cares, surely mothers in the private walks of life should find leisure for discharging a similar duty towards their offspring.

Washington, the Father of his Country, is another example in point. He was conspicuous for the natural virtues of frugality, industry, self-restraint, and respect for authority. He exhibited remarkable fortitude in time of war, and great magnanimity and disinterestedness in time of peace. Above all, he possessed a love of truth and an habitual recognition of the overruling Providence of God. And he glories in declaring that these traits were impressed on his youthful mind by his mother, for whom he had a profound reverence, and whom in his letters he usually addressed as his "honored" mother.

I have spoken of a son of Virginia. Let me now refer to a son of North Carolina. There is no man whose name is more tenderly enshrined

in the hearts of the people of North Carolina than Judge William Gaston. His name is a household word in every town and hamlet of the Old North State. His father was of Huguenot extraction. His mother was a pious English Catholic lady. His father warmly espoused the cause of American Independence, and on that account he was an object of special hatred to the British and to the Tories who sided with them. When the English troops made an attack on New Bern in 1781, the first object of their assault was the elder Gaston, who, with his wife and two little children fled to the river in the hope of escaping his pursuers. He jumped into a boat, leaving his wife and children on the bank. His trembling wife begged the soldiers on her knees to spare the life of her husband, and not make her a widow, and her children orphans. But the troops, heedless of her entreaties, fired over her head, and slew her husband in the presence of his wife and children. Hence it was afterwards beautifully said of young Gaston that "he was baptized to liberty in his father's blood."

From that moment Mrs. Gaston spared no pains in the religious and moral training of her children. She was then, perhaps, the only Catholic lady residing in New Bern. Her son lived to fill one of the highest positions in the State, that of Judge of the Supreme Court, to which he was elected in 1834.

Up to the year 1835, a clause remained in the Constitution of North Carolina debarring Catholics from holding certain important offices of State. Judge Gaston was a member of the Convention which that year framed a new State Constitution. He delivered a speech in favor of Catholic enfranchisement which for theological learning, soundness of argument, consummate tact and

sublime eloquence, has seldom been surpassed in the halls of legislation. By his persuasive words, unaided and alone, he struck the fetters off the feet of his fellow-worshippers, and established religious emancipation in North Carolina. Judge Gaston was fond of referring to his mother, and he attributed to her, not only the heritage of his faith, but also those high moral qualities which endeared him to his fellow-citizens.

How differently would another mother more temporizing and worldly than Mrs. Gaston have acted under similar circumstances! She would have said to her son: "My boy, we are here alone. If you make an open profession of your creed, you will be exposed to the insults of your companions; and when you grow up to man's estate, you will be debarred from all political preferment, and condemned to social ostracism. Compromise, then, is the word. As there is no Catholic church or Sunday-school in New Bern, you can join your companions in their worship. There is no help for it. The current of public opinion is too strong to be resisted." And if young Gaston had floated down with the stream, he might, indeed, have attained civic and social distinction, with all its earthly emoluments, but he would never have commanded that homage which all men pay to heroic principle, nor would he have been held up to the admiring gaze of his co-religionists in his native State.

Not so spoke Mrs. Gaston. My son, she said, there must be no surrender. You must be true, at all hazards, to your religious convictions. You must with Moses boldly deny that you are "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." You must deny that you are the son of the reigning queen,—of the religion that lords it over us. You must avow

that you are the child of the despised Hebrew, and of that divine Mother who now sits sorrowful, awaiting the day of deliverance. You must, like Moses, "choose rather to be afflicted with the people of God, than to have the pleasure of sin for a time," and you must "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the Egyptians, and look for the reward to come." [1]

Gaston followed his mother's counsel, and in so doing he not only received the "hundred-fold," an earthly reward, for his memory is enthroned among the people of his native State, but also, I trust, the eternal recompense promised to faith and virtue.

Viewing Judge Gaston's life in the light of the civil and religious equality we enjoy to-day, and of the social elevation which Catholics have attained, we might deem him worthy of small praise; but if we transport ourselves to his times, when they groaned under civil and religious disabilities, the conduct of Gaston must be pronounced heroic.

And if in our day the religion of Christ is firmly rooted in the land, this happy condition is largely due to the faith and piety of Christian wives and mothers. Our noble army of apostolic women "are the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the honor of our people;" they are the saviors of society, and a blessing to the nation.

It is true, indeed, that they are not clothed with the priestly character. They can not offer the Holy Sacrifice, nor administer the Sacraments. But may we not apply to them the words of St. Peter: "Ye are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood?" Yes, they are consecrated priestesses of the domestic temple, where they daily offer up in the sanctuary of their homes, and

[1] I. Heb. xi., 26.

on the altar of their hearts, the sacrifice of praise and prayer, of supplication and thanksgiving to Almighty God.

They can not preach the word of God in public, for women are commanded by the Apostle to be silent in the churches. But they are apostles by prayer, by good deeds and edifying example. They preach most effectually to the members of the household. The seed of the word of God which we scatter from the pulpit would often bear little fruit if it were not watered and nurtured by the care of our pious mothers.

How many a home would be desolate, how many a son would lie buried in a grave of sin, if he were not revived by the prayers of a devoted mother, as the son of the widow of Naim was brought back to life through the tears of that desolate woman! How many a lamp of faith and religion would grow dim and be utterly extinguished, if it were not fed by the oil of piety poured out by a Christian wife or mother!

Emulate, then, O Christian parents, the example of such women. Recognize the sublime and solemn duty which devolves upon you. "What is more noble," exclaims St. Chrysostom, "than to form the minds of youth? He who fashions the morals of children performs a task in my judgment more sublime than that of any painter or sculptor." In contemplating the mangificent works of art exhibited in St. Peter's Roman Basilica, we extol the genius of the masters who produced them, and we know not which to admire more, the statues which adorn that church, or the great cathedral itself in which these masterpieces are enshrined. But you, fathers and mothers, in forming the character of your children, are engaged in a far more exalted pursuit. You

are creating living portraits that are destined to adorn, not only earthly temples, but also the Temple above, not made with hands, where they will be the joy and admiration of the angels of God.

Remember, Christian parents, and especially mothers, that to you is confided the most precious portion of our Lord's vineyard, which on that account, should be cultivated with the greatest solicitude. On you devolves the duty of directing the pliant and susceptible minds of your children, and of planting in their tender hearts the seeds of heavenly knowledge. If your work is diligently accomplished, the subsequent labor of God's ministers will become easy and agreeable. If your work is neglected, if you allow tares and weeds to overrun the ground, the efforts of the clergy will be usually irksome and sometimes unavailing. It is yours to plant the seed of the word of God in the virgin soil, and when a more experienced hand is required to cultivate it, the ministers of God will not fail in laboring to bring it to maturity.

And mark well: when I speak of home education, I do not mean only the lessons in Christian Doctrine which are to be taught to the children. But I desire still more that your household be pervaded by a religious atmosphere. Let your home be the sanctuary of domestic peace, sobriety, and parental love. Let discontent and angry words be banished from it, and under such influences your children will grow in virtue. Above all, let it be the asylum of daily prayer; and then the angels of God and the God of angels will be there.

I exhort you, parents, in the name of God whose representatives you are, whose place you hold, I exhort you in the name of the holy religion

you profess; I ask you in the name of your country, that requires you to rear up, not scourges of society, but law-abiding members; I ask you in the name of your own eternal salvation, which is involved in the destiny of your children, for whom you will have to render a strict account, to provide for them at home a moral and religious training: "If any one," says the Apostle, "have not care of his own, and especially of those of his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."[1]

And then what a subject of joy and consolation it will be to you in your declining years, when you reflect that you will leave after you children who will inherit not only your name and your fortune, but also your faith and your virtues! How gratifying it will be to hope that when you are gone, when the place you now occupy in church will have been vacated by you, it will be filled by sons and daughters who will perpetuate your memory! And your children, when they enter the temple of God, will recall to mind that they owe to you, not only their life but also their religion, and they will remember you with gratitude. "They will rise up and call you blessed."[2]

[1] I. Tim. v., 8. [2] Prov. xxxi., 28.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

JOHN II., 1-12.

OUR Divine Redeemer was more in the habit of frequenting scenes of sorrow and suffering than those of joyous festivity. But in this day's Gospel we are informed that He attended a wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, accompanied by His mother and His disciples; and He signalized the occasion by performing His first miracle, when He changed water into wine.

Christ came on earth to reform and uplift humanity. And like a wise reformer, He determined to begin the work of regeneration at the fountain head, by purifying the marriage bond. For the married couple is the source of the family, and the family is the source of society. He knew well that the stream would not be pure unless the fountain was clear, and that sweet and delicious fruit can come only from a sound and healthy tree. "Men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles."

Marriage is the oldest contract ever formed on earth. The terrestrial Paradise was the scene of this compact. Our primitive parents were the contracting parties. God Himself was at once the minister and witness of the nuptial tie, and their union was solemnly ratified by Him in these words: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." [1]

[1] Gen. ii., 24.

Christian marriage, with which alone we are here concerned, has three essential characteristics, namely, unity, sanctity, and indissolubility.

The Christian Lawgiver restores marriage to its primeval unity, as it was originally instituted by Almighty God, and He ratifies and confirms the words of Genesis: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall adhere to his *wife,* and they shall be two in one flesh."[1] And St. Paul declares that a husband shall be content with his own wife, and a wife with her own husband.[2] This law of monogamy has been the unvarying teaching of the religion of Christ from its foundation to the present time.

Christian wedlock is a sacred covenant. It is holy, because it has God Himself for its primitive Founder. And our blessed Redeemer was pleased to stamp it with the seal of His special approval and blessing when He attended the wedding feast of Cana.

It is a holy union also, because Christ has raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament. Speaking of Matrimony, St. Paul says: "This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the church."[3] The union of Christ with the Church is the symbol of the union of the husband with his wife. As Christ is allied to His heavenly Spouse by an inseparable union, and as He manifested His love for her, even to the shedding of His blood, so should the husband be attached to his earthly spouse by pure conjugal affection and by unvarying loyalty, even to death.

Marriage is also the most inviolable and the most irrevocable contract that can exist. Every human compact, but this, may be lawfully dissolved. Nations may be justified in abrogating

[1] Matt. xix., 5. [2] I. Cor. vii. [3] Eph. v., 32.

treaties with each other. Merchants may dissolve partnerships. Brothers will eventually leave the parental roof and divide their inheritance. Friends, like Abraham and Lot, may part company. But the marriage bond can never be dissolved except by death. No earthly sword can cut the knot that God has tied. "A man shall leave father and mother, and shall adhere to his wife." For "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

It is worthy of note that three of the four Evangelists, as well as the Apostle of the Gentiles, all proclaim the indissolubility of the nuptial bond, and forbid a married person to engage in second wedlock while his or her spouse is living. The reason, no doubt, for emphasizing this law, was because the divine Legislator, who knew so well the heart of man, foresaw that the most clear and imperative ordinance was necessary to serve as a barrier against the passions of men, who are ever prone by their degenerate nature to yield more to their inordinate appetite than to follow the voice of conscience.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, our Lord declares that "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery."[1] The clause, "*except for fornication,*" may permit a legal separation, or a cessation from co-habitation, but it can never justify either party to contract a subsequent marriage while both parties are living. St. Mark and St. Luke forbid absolute divorce without any qualification whatsoever. And St. Paul says that the wife may not depart from the husband, nor the husband from the wife. But

[1] Matt. xix., 9.

if they depart, that both remain unmarried or be reconciled to each other.[1]

The Church, following the light of the Gospels, absolutely condemns divorce *a vinculo,* that is, she forbids the divorced consort to engage in second wedlock. This is the law she has proclaimed in the face of powerful kings and emperors. This is the law she has upheld in spite of the resistance and rebellion of lascivious consorts.

Christian wives and mothers, what a debt of gratitude you owe to the Catholic Church for the honorable position you now hold in family and social life! If you are no longer considered as the slaves, but the mistresses, of your households; if you are no longer regarded as tenants at will, but the queens of the domestic kingdom, and the peers of your husbands, you owe your emancipation to the Church of Christ that contended for your rights at the cost of her blood. You are especially indebted for your elevation to the Popes who stood up in all the majesty of their spiritual authority to redress the wrongs of injured woman against the lust and tyranny of her unfaithful spouse.

If such is the holiness and the binding character of the marriage bond, how pure and upright should be the dispositions of those who aspire to that state of life! The candidates for wedlock should first of all submit the matter to God, imploring the Father of light to guide them in their choice. For, a virtuous consort is eminently the gift of Heaven. "House and riches," says the Book of Proverbs, "are given by parents, but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord."[2]

The aspirants to marriage, like Tobias and his bride, ought to ask God beforehand to give His

[1] I. Cor. vii., 11. [2] Prov. xix., 14.

blessing to their union, saying with that model couple: "We are the children of the saints, and we must not be joined together like the heathens who know not God." [1]

You will readily admit the necessity of this forecast, when you reflect that matrimony is not a trivial ceremony, but a solemn and momentous covenant which seals your future happiness or misery for time and eternity. If a merchant is wary in choosing a business partner, whose copartnership is subject to revocation, how vigilant should you be in selecting a partner for life? If you are cautious in the choice of transitory friends, how discreet ought you to be in the selection of an enduring helpmate? You would not care to undertake even a brief voyage with persons whose companionship would be uncongenial to you, and will you thoughtlessly embark on the voyage of life with a consort whose incompatibility of temper will make your earthly pilgrimage an intolerable burden?

The young ecclesiastic who aspires to the exalted dignity of the priesthood, spends a long time in trying his vocation. He is daily occupied in ascertaining whether he has the requisite dispositions of mind and heart to qualify him for the sacred ministry. And it is only after a probation of ten or twelve years that he can conscientiously say at the foot of the altar: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup."

Now, my young friends, there is a vocation to the married state as well as to the priesthood. You should, therefore, meditate seriously and pray fervently that God may direct you in your choice before you pronounce with a clear conscience these solemn words at the altar of God: "I take thee

[1] Tobias viii., 5.

for my lawful partner from this day forward, for better, for worse, for riches, for poorer, in sickness and in health till death do us part."

Before purchasing a house, you will examine its title, its situation, and its adaptability to your wants. And will you purchase the heart and affection of a life companion, and surrender yourself to her, before you ascertain that you are adapted to each other's society?

When you invest your money in a piece of jewelry, you are more careful to examine its value than the casket which contains it. And when you resolve to take a helpmate to your heart and home, you should be more concerned about the sterling value of her mind and soul than her exterior attractions, or the ornaments which grace her person. Choose not, then, for your spouse a woman who is distinguished only for her beauty, or her wealth, or her fascinating manners. These may suit well as accessories, but without the more essential qualities, they are not sufficient to contribute to your happiness. "Favor is deceitful, beauty is vain, but the woman who feareth the Lord she shall be praised." [1]

What will a handsome face avail you, if it be but a specious mask to conceal an unamiable disposition, or an ungovernable temper? Time will write wrinkles on the fair brow, and will cause the cheeks to fade. But a loyal and loving heart never grows old. It will always be a gushing fountain refreshing and cheering the heart of the husband. A rich wife can not promote your happiness unless she can offer you, with her wealth, the priceless treasure of true conjugal affection. The most miserable consorts often pine away in gilded palaces.

[1] Prov. xxxi., 30.

Seek a wife who is virtuous in her conduct, modest in her demeanor, discreet and temperate in speech, and who is trained in the school of domestic habits. She will create for you a quiet, contented and cheerful home.

It is chiefly the neglect of this foresight that leads to so many ill-sorted marriages, and to so much conjugal infelicity. Two young persons become suddenly acquainted with each other, perhaps on a voyage, or at a summer resort, or at some ball or entertainment where everything assumes a charmed aspect. The senses are bewitched and the passions inflamed by the surrounding objects which move like a kaleidoscope before the raptured vision.

Amid these intoxicating scenes a marriage is hastily proposed and hastily accepted. They rush to be united in the bonds of wedlock without once asking God's blessing on their espousals, without parents' consent or knowledge, and often without obtaining the benediction of the Church. They know full well that a Catholic priest will impose conditions and restrictions to which they are unwilling to submit. Hence they will have recourse to a more pliant minister who will put no constraint on their conscience. The first step in their matrimonial venture being a sacrilege, you may divine what is to be the outcome.

The love between these consorts will soon collapse, because it is not founded on virtue. They grow cold and indifferent towards each other. Indifference begets estrangement, and estrangement ripens into aversion. At first a small speck appears on the domestic horizon. This little cloud grows larger and more ominous, till at length it descends like a fearful torrent on the heads of the ill-mated couple. And frequently a divorce is

the last link in the chain of an unfortunate alliance.

Another cause of unsuccessful marriages arises from the fact that the wife is not penetrated with a proper sense of her responsibilities, and is impatient of domestic duties and restraints. She is never in repose unless she is in motion. She is never at rest unless she is in a state of morbid activity. She never feels at home unless she finds herself abroad. When she is at home, her environments are irksome to her. She chafes and frets under the dull monotony of her married life, which she finds to be not a sweet, but a galling yoke. She pants for a more exhilarating atmosphere. Her heart is exulting, in imagination, in some social triumph, or reveling in some scene of gaiety and dissipation.

Her afflicted husband comes home to find his house vacant, or occupied by a spouse whose heart is empty of affection for him. She is ill at ease. Hence arise disputes, quarrels and recriminations proceeding from a manifest incompatibility of temper. An idle, aimless, selfish life will prove her ruin. "Behold," says the Prophet, "the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance, and the idleness of her daughters, and they did not put forth their hand to the needy."[1] Would to God that the awful fate of Sodom may serve as a warning to the wives and daughters of America.

Young men who contemplate marriage, let me address a few words of friendly admonition to you. Never do you assume a more grave responsibility in life, than when you take to your home the young bride of your choice. The woman whom you espouse abandons the parental roof, and confides

[1] Ezech. xvi., 49.

in your honor and protection. O let not that sacred trust be reposed in you in vain! Her fond parents place in your hands a precious jewel, compared with which they regard all earthly riches as dross. Let not the lustre of that jewel grow dim and be obscured through your neglect or indifference, but rather let it grow brighter and more radiant under the genial beams of your warm and generous heart. "Husbands," says St. Paul, "love your wives as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it. So also ought men love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For, no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ does the Church."[1] Let Christ's enduring love for His Church be the heavenly exemplar of your unfailing devotion to your wedded wife.

You will love her next to God with your whole soul. You will be ready to make any sacrifice to protect her honor, and to promote her happiness. You will prove your love by your deeds. By your industry you will make her comfortable. By your sobriety you will make her contented; and by your faithful compliance with your religious duties, you will bring down on your household the benediction of Heaven.

And let me exhort you, young women who have embraced the married state, to love, honor, and obey your husbands. "As the Church," says St. Paul, "is subject to Christ, so also let wives be to their husbands in all things."[2] This obedience, far from being irksome, will become easy and delightful when prompted by genuine affection.

Be fond of your home. Be attached to your household duties. Cultivate domestic habits.

[1] Eph. v. 29. [2] Eph. v. 24.

Make your home so comfortable and attractive that it may be a sanctuary of peace to your husband. When he returns to you in the evening, after buffeting the waves of the world, let him find the home a haven of rest and tranquility.

To both husbands and wives I would say,—As matrimony is a sacred ordinance, it should be received in a state of grace, and hence before pledging your faith to each other, you ought to be purified by the Sacrament of Penance and fortified by the Bread of Life. Regard your marriage as a yoke to be equally borne by both of you. "Bear ye one another's burden, and so ye shall fulfill the law of Christ." Let the flowers of joy and peace, which spring from the seed of righteousness, grow abundantly along your pathway. Let the sacred flame of conjugal love, which God Himself has consecrated, glow in your hearts, consuming all inordinate and illicit affections. Let the angel with the flaming sword, that guarded the earthly Paradise, preside over your household, repelling from it the forbidden fruit of unlawful pleasure. For what is a home from which chastity has fled, but a desecrated temple from which the Spirit of God has departed? And what are the tumultuous gratifications of the flesh but Dead Sea apples, compared with the tranquil delights of conjugal purity? May your union, which was begun on earth, be perpetuated in Heaven.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GROWTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

MATT. VIII., 1-13. "I say to you that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall recline with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven."

IT seems to me that this prophecy of our Savior finds an appropriate application in the progress of the religion of Christ in the United States. For, have we not beheld hosts of our fellow Christians coming to our shores from the East and the West of Europe, and reclining with their native brethren, the spiritual children of Abraham, in the courts of the Lord?

Before proceeding to dwell upon the leading causes contributing to the growth of the Catholic religion in the United States, it is not out of place to make some allusion to the first Archbishop of Baltimore, whose patriotism and sagacity inaugurated an era of good will between the Church and the new Republic.

I regard the selection of Dr. Carroll as a most providential event for the welfare of the American Church. If a prelate of narrow views, a man out of sympathy and harmony with the genius of the new Republic had been chosen, the progress of religion would have been seriously impeded. It is true, the Constitution has declared that no one should be molested on account of religion; but a written instrument would have been a feeble barrier to stem the tide of popular and traditional prejudice unless it was vindicated and fortified

by the patriotic example of the Patriarch of the American Church.

John Carroll was the man for the occasion. We may apply to him the words spoken of John the Baptist: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came for a witness, to bear witness of the light." He was a man of sterling piety and enlightened zeal. These gifts endeared him to the faithful. He was a man of consummate tact, of courteous manners and unfailing charity. He enjoyed intimate relations with his fellow townsmen in the various walks of life, without distinction of creed. He was deeply concerned in civil as well as in religious affairs. The interest that he took in social and literary improvement rendered him very popular with his fellow citizens. He was, withal, a sturdy patriot, and he labored indefatigably for the success of American independence. In 1776 he accompanied Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll of Carrollton in their mission to Canada, to secure the co-operation of that country in the cause of colonial autonomy. He was thoroughly in touch with the spirit of our institutions, and by these loyal sentiments he won the esteem and confidence of his countrymen, and the friendship of the first chief magistrate, the immortal Washington.

A short time before his consecration, Dr. Carroll addressed a letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, in which he reviewed the condition of religion in this country. He states that the Catholic clergy numbered twenty-five members, and he estimates the Catholic population at twenty-five thousand, residing chiefly in Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York. The United States did not then include the territory of Louisiana,

which contained a few scattered Catholics, chiefly of French descent.

At the present time, one century since Baltimore was raised to a Metropolitan See, the Church in the United States comprises a hierarchy of nearly one hundred bishops, sixteen thousand priests, and a Catholic population numbering fourteen millions. If we include our Porto Rico and Philippine possessions the number of the faithful under the aegis of the American flag will amount to fully twenty-two millions.

Let us now consider to what auspicious agencies we are to ascribe this marvellous growth. The development of Christ's kingdom in the great Republic of the West, is due, under God, to three causes,—the natural increase of families, conversions, and the stream of immigration pouring from foreign lands during the past century.

The addition to the Catholic fold by natural accretion is, of course, very considerable, for with rare exceptions, our Christian mothers, thank God, are thus far not initiated in the dark mysteries of race-suicide.

We can also point with hope and consolation to the numerous conversions that are every year swelling the ranks of our clergy and laity. In the diocese of Baltimore the annual conversions average eight hundred souls. I have but limited means of ascertaining the number of converts that enter the Church in other parts of the country; but if the other dioceses had the same number of conversions in proportion to the Catholic population, the aggregate accessions of neophytes would amount annually to about forty-five thousand, on a basis of a population of fourteen millions.

But the preponderating cause of our increased Catholic population must be attributed to the tide

of immigration that has been steadily flowing from Europe to the shores of America.

The first country to which this State owes a debt of gratitude for the faith, is England: for Maryland, the mother Church of the United States, was founded by English Catholics. Leonard Calvert, the brother of Lord Baltimore, together with a colony of English Catholic gentlemen and their families, sailed from Cowes in the Isle of Wight, in *The Ark* and *The Dove,* and landed on the banks of the Potomac in 1634.

This colony was the first to establish the blessings of civil and religious liberty on American soil. In the mother country the colonists had drunk the bitter waters of persecution, and now, when they enjoyed the luxury of freedom, instead of having recourse to measures of retaliation, or of restricting this precious boon to themselves, they determined to share it with others. While the Puritans of New England persecuted other Christians, and while the Episcopalians of Virginia proscribed Puritans, Catholic Maryland gave freedom and hospitality to Puritans and Episcopalians alike. In the words of Bancroft: "The foundation of this colony of Maryland was peacefully and happily laid. Within six months it had advanced more than Virginia had in as many years. But far more memorable was the character of the Maryland institutions. Every other country in the world had persecuting laws, but through the benign administration of the government of that province, no person professing to believe in Jesus Christ was permitted to be molested on account of religion. Under the munificence and superintending mildness of Lord Baltimore, a dreary wilderness was soon quickened with swarming life, and activity of prosperous settlements. The Ro-

man Catholics who were oppressed by the laws of England were sure to find a peaceful asylum in the quiet harbors of the Chesapeake, and there, too, Protestants were sheltered from Protestant intolerance. Such were the beautiful auspices under which Maryland started into being. Its history is the history of benevolence, gratitude and toleration."[1]

You will all, I am sure, agree with me that no country in Europe has contributed more efficiently to the establishment and growth of the Catholic religion among us than faithful Ireland. Whatever may have been the unhappy causes that have led to the expatriation of so many of Ireland's sons and daughters from their native soil, Almighty God has made their exile subservient to higher and holier purposes. I can safely affirm that there is scarcely a city or town throughout the United States where the Catholic religion has not been preached and sustained by priests and laymen of Irish birth or extraction.

Daniel Webster, in a speech in the United States Senate, thus describes the vast extent of the British Empire: "She has dotted over the whole surface of the globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, encircles the earth with one unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

May we not say with truth that the Irish missionary has preached the Gospel wherever England has established her laws? He has enlarged the kingdom of Christ wherever England has extended her territorial dominion. The Irish Apostle has erected a house of prayer wherever the British functionary has built a fort or a custom-

[1] Vol. I., Chap. vii.

house. He has planted the cross, the symbol of salvation, wherever the British soldier has planted the banner of St. George.

The Church in America is also indebted for her progress and development to the Catholic immigrants from Germany, Bohemia, Poland, and other parts of Eastern Europe. These colonists have inherited the national traits of their warlike ancestors who came down from the north in the fifth and sixth centuries and invaded southern Europe. They dismembered the decaying Roman Empire, and established a new civilization on the ruins of the old. Many of them have settled in our western prairie lands. They have become speedily assimilated with the native population, animated by the patriotism of American citizens, and cherishing an ardent love for the faith of their fathers.

These valuable acquisitions to our population are conspicuous for their thrift and industry, and for their sturdy devotion to the cause of Christian education. Their pious aim has been to establish Christian schools side by side with the church in which they worship.

There is another country across the Atlantic, which deserves an honorable mention,—a country whose sons were the pioneers of religion on American soil. For three centuries after the discovery of our continent, heroic missionaries from Catholic France were laboring in evangelizing and civilizing the aboriginal tribes of North America. They explored our lakes, our rivers and mountains, carrying the torch of faith in one hand and the torch of science in the other, and they forwarded to the mother country charts of this continent which, even to this day, are regarded as marvels of topographical accuracy.

As a result of their labors, there are few Indian tribes to-day in the United States or Canada, that do not know and revere the black robe.

If these heroic men accomplished so much when they had no boats but frail canoes, no roads but eternal snows, virgin forests and desert wastes, no compass but the naked eye, no guide save faith, and hope, and God, how much more should not and can not the Lord's ministers effect to-day by means of railroads and steamships and other appliances of modern civilization!

Yes, we bless you, O men of genius, we bless your inventions and discoveries. We hail you as agents of God, and we will impress you into the service of the Most High, and will exclaim with the Prophet: "Sun and moon, bless the Lord, fire and heat, bless the Lord. Lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord. All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord. Praise and exalt Him above all forever." [1]

And thus we see that, as every nation of Europe contributed a block of marble to the Washington Monument in the Capital, so have various countries of that continent contributed a column to the edifice of Catholic faith in the United States.

Let us do all in our power to perfect and adorn this spiritual temple; let us make it so attractive by our virtues and good works, that we shall impel the stranger to enter and adore: "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Gentiles shall walk in thy light. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see. All these are gathered together. Thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side." May these words of the Prophet be a prediction of the future glory of the Church of America.

[1] Dan. iii., 57.

Candor compels me to admit that the bright picture I have set before you has its sombre shadows. In the triumphal march of the hosts of the Lord to the heavenly Jerusalem during the past century, many of His followers have lagged behind, and have fallen by the wayside, and some have ignominiously cast away their armor and joined the forces of the enemy.

It is proper, therefore, before concluding, that I should make a few remarks on the defections from the faith among us.

The losses we have sustained may be ascribed to three principal causes. The first may be referred to the scarcity of priests, especially in the early period of our history. Many of the immigrants that came to our shores, were scattered over a large area of territory, where they were rarely, if ever, visited by a clergyman of their faith. They might reside for years in adjoining farms or districts, and yet be unconscious of possessing a common religious belief. They had no rallying point, no church where they could assemble and be a source of strength to one another. The only sanctuary where they could enjoy the consolations of religion was the domestic hearth. Under these discouraging circumstances, it was not surprising that their faith waxed cold. Their children fared even worse. Without a chapel or Sunday-school of their own, they were often tempted to unite with their companions in attending services at variance with the religion of their fathers.

The leakage arising from the paucity of priests, has been happily stopped, or considerably lessened, except in some remote sections of the country. Anointed ministers and churches are multiplied, religious books and periodicals are largely circulated, new congregations are daily organized

throughout the land, and organization is a necessary condition of growth and development. The losses sustained by defections are more than counterbalanced, it is hoped, by conversions.

We have also to deplore the pernicious effects of mixed marriages as occasions of the loss of faith. The frequent outcome of such unions is a spirit of religious indifference on the part of the Catholic spouse, and its total loss on the part of the children; or where their faith is nominally preserved, it is often more or less diluted. The religious convictions of an impressionable child must suffer from his knowledge of the conflicting views of his parents. His zeal for Catholic truth is apt to be chilled when he sees that his father or mother is of a different belief. The evil of such alliances is accentuated in localities where the Catholic community is numerically small and exerts but little social influence. I must avow, as the result of my personal observation, that in the diocese of Baltimore we have gained at least as many as we have lost by mixed marriages. Not a few of the most edifying and prominent members of the Church in this city are the fruit of such wedlocks. I can recall a venerable couple differing in faith, from whom three generations of children have sprung, numbering about eighty-five souls, and all of them loyal to the faith of their Catholic mother. My personal experience, however, has little weight when counterbalenced by the overwhelming testimony of missionaries throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Another cause of shrinkage is found in our public school system of education, from which all positive Christian doctrine is excluded. A considerable proportion of our Catholic children unhappily receive little or no religious instruction from their

parents, and when they frequent the public schools their associations and environments are usually unfriendly to our faith. They are daily breathing an atmosphere not calculated to strengthen their growth in Christian piety. When they advance in years, they become indifferent to the religion of their baptism, having no ties except a waning tradition to bind them to the Catholic faith. They are no longer identified with the Church of their fathers, though they are rarely guilty of formal apostasy. Indeed, I have never yet met a man who has forsaken the Catholic religion on purely intellectual and conscientious grounds. He may ostensibly justify his step by repudiating some Christian mystery as repugnant to his convictions. But a close investigation will reveal the fact that he was influenced by sordid and selfish motives.

The injury wrought by public schools is finding a partial antidote in our parochial schools, which are firmly established and are extending their usefulness throughout the country. The heroic generosity of our Catholic parents, with the sacrifices which it involves in supporting Christian schools, and at the same time bearing the burden of general education, can not fail to have its heavenly recompense; and a discerning and fair-minded American people, while admiring such devotion to faith and principle, will, I trust, one day recognize and exercise the sacred duty of giving us an equitable share in the public school funds.

God forbid that the success that has marked the history of the Church in the past century should beguile us ministers of Christ into indolence and self-complacency; for we are reaping the fruits of our fathers' toil: "Others have labored," says our Lord, "and you have entered into their la-

bors."[1] Let their example rather stimulate us to renewed energy in our day and generation. Let us make every effort that none of the precious souls committed to our care shall stray from the path of truth and righteousness, and that each of us can say: "Of those whom Thou hast given me, I have not lost any one."[2]

And may we all, both clergy and people, remember that there are seventy-five millions of our fellow-countrymen who are yet outside the true fold. May we do all in our power that they may enjoy with us the plenitude of our Christian heritage, that they may recline with us at the heavenly banquet which our Lord has prepared for the spiritual children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and may acknowledge with us the supremacy of Christ's Vicar upon earth.

God grant that the religion of Christ, which in the first ages of Christianity impelled the learned and luxurious Romans to submit to the sweet yoke of the Gospel, and which centuries later gained peaceful victories over the warlike Goths and Vandals, Huns and Visigoths, Saxons, Saracens and Lombards, and other conquering invaders of Europe, and moulded them all into one Christian family, may unite the heterogeneous multitudes that flock to our shores from other nations, as well as the sturdy descendants of the primitive settlers, in "the one fold of the one Shepherd," so that, as all pay allegiance to a common flag, and uphold a common constitution, they may combine in reverencing the same banner of the Cross, in worshipping at the same altar, and in professing "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

[1] John iv., 38. [2] *Ibid.* xviii., 9.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

"LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW."

ROM. XIII., 8-11. "He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law."

IF I were asked what is the underlying principle of the Gospel, what is the essential characteristic of the religion of Jesus Christ, I would say: it is love. Group together the ten Commandments, the evangelical precepts, and the exhortations of the Apostles. Group together all the admonitions of the Old and the New Testament. Analyze them all, and they are all summarized in one short word, and that word is Love. "Love," says the Apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law," that is to say, the whole law is fulfilled by love. Love, therefore, is the shortest, safest and surest road to righteousness here, and to salvation hereafter. When our Lord was asked to epitomize the Decalogue, He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these commandments hang the law and the prophets."

Love, then, is the essence of Christianity, in contradistinction to all other religions.

The Hebrew people, though they were God's chosen race, lived under the law of fear. They were restrained from vice more by the fear of punishment than by the hope of reward. They were accustomed to address God by the title of King, Ruler, Jehovah, Judge, Lord and Master; but in the whole range of the Old Testament they

very rarely presumed to call God by the endearing name of Father. Not so you, says St. Paul, addressing the Christians of his time: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby ye cry: Abba, Father. For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God, and if sons, heirs also, heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ." [1]

I do not deny that the Hebrews were commanded to love God, but fear was the predominant feature of their worship. I do not deny that we are commanded to fear God, but love, with us Christians, is the leading motive to draw us to God.

The Pagan or Heathen worshiped his gods. He feared them, and prostrated himself before them. He offered sacrifice to them in order to propitiate them. But the thought never occurred to him of loving them. He was too far removed from them to entertain any sentiment of affection for them; for love presupposes some equality between the lover and the person beloved.

Our Savior God discovered a basis of equality between Himself and man. He said: I will descend from Heaven to earth. I will manifest Myself to the world. I will clothe Myself with humanity. I will become man. I will become bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. I will place Myself on a level with him. I will take upon Myself his sorrows and infirmities. I will become his brother, friend and companion. I will love him so ardently that I shall compel him to love Me. Oh! the wonderful condescension of God, that He should command us to love Him, and is angry with us if we do not love Him. That God should command us to fear Him, is not to be marvelled at. But that

[1] Rom. viii., 16, 17.

He should command us to love Him, is calculated to win our wondering admiration. This is the Incarnation in a nutshell.

1st. The love of Christ is extended to all mankind without distinction of race, color, or condition of life: "God so loved the world as to deliver up His only begotten Son, so that *every* one who believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have eternal life."[1] His arms are wide-stretched on the cross, to indicate that His love is world-wide, universal, all-embracing.

2d. But Christ not only loves all men collectively, He loves each one of you in particular. I always admire that saying of the Apostle: "I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." He does not say: The Son of God loved the human family. He does not say: He loved the Hebrew people. He does not say: Christ loved the Tribe of Benjamin of whom I am descended. But he says Christ loved me individually. You all can say the same. Christ loves each of you as ardently as if you alone existed in the world,—just as the sun's rays shine as brightly upon you, as if no other being were on the face of the earth.

3d. Our Savior, like ourselves, had his particular friendships. There are some members of the human family for whom He showed a special predilection. He had a singular affection for children on account of their innocence, simplicity and guilelessness of heart. You may observe how frequently His tender regard for children is manifested in the Gospels. When mothers brought their babes in their arms to be blessed by Him, He rebuked His Apostles for trying to repel them. He embraced these infants and said: "Suffer the

[1] John iii., 16.

little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

4th. He loved not only innocent youth, but for your comfort and mine, He loved also repentant sinners. We all know how tender was His compassion for the erring Magdalen. He loved her because of her humility of heart, her spirit of repentance, and her profound gratitude. "I say to you," He declares, "that many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." Oh! how great is the power of repentance since it transforms a slave of Satan and a moral leper into an elect of God!

5th. Christ had also a particular affection for Lazarus, and his sisters Mary and Martha, on account of their devotion to Him, and their hospitality towards Him. When Jesus knew of the death of Lazarus, He paid a visit of condolence to his sisters. Martha on meeting Him, exclaimed: "If thou hadst been present, my brother had not died." She did not yet know that Christ's influence is not diminished by His bodily absence. He was brought to the grave where Lazarus had lain for four days. We are told that Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus. We read not that he ever laughed. And yet those tears of Jesus have brought more joy and solace to the human heart than all the mirth-provoking books that ever were written. Jesus wept, to show that He had not only a divine Personality, but also a human heart, full of human sympathy for the suffering and sorrowing, that He came to sanctify sorrow and to be the great Consoler of the disconsolate. He wept, to prove to us that those who have drunk of the cup of sorrow, and have sounded the depths of human misery, can most adequately condole with the sufferings of others. He wished also to teach

us that a tender sensibility is not only compatible with greatness of soul, but is essential to sturdy manhood.

When the Jews observed Christ weeping, they exclaimed: Behold how He loved Lazarus! If we are to judge of the love of Jesus for Lazarus by the few tears He shed at his grave, how are we to estimate His love for us by the tears of blood He shed for us during His passion.

Christ, who foresaw all things, knew full well that the raising up of Lazarus would whet the hatred of His enemies and hasten His own death. As soon as the high priests and Pharisees had heard of the miracle, they became alarmed at the increasing influence of our Lord among the people, and from that very day, they designed to put Him to death. Let us learn a lesson from Christ's heroic conduct. Let us never hesitate to perform a good deed, even though we foresee that it will bring us no earthly recompense, but will rather involve us in suffering and humiliation.

6th. Jesus had a very special attachment to His Apostles who were the companions of His journeys, the witnesses of His miracles and good works, the destined heralds of His Gospel. He called them by the endearing name of friends: "I will no longer," He says, "call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth. But I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you." He addressed them also by the affectionate title of brothers. When our Lord was apprehended in the garden and was in the hands of His enemies, when, humanly speaking, He had most need of the loyalty and support of His disciples, they shamefully fled from Him to save their own lives. Yet, after His resurrection,

what is the first message He sends them? Does He upbraid them for their treachery, their denial, their disloyalty and abandonment of Him? Not a word of reproach does He utter. But He sends them this message of love: "Go, tell My brethren: I ascend to their Father and to My Father, to their God and My God." How tenacious is our memory of real or fancied injuries, how treacherous it is in regard to favors received! Let us learn a lesson of forgiveness from our Master. It is far more noble to pardon than to be avenged. It is the part of the animal man to retaliate an injury. It is only God and the sons of God that have the magnanimity to forgive.

7th. But Christ's special predilection was reserved for John the Evangelist. He is called by excellence "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" not that He loved the other Apostles less, but that He loved John more. John was particularly cherished by his Master because of his amiable disposition, his candor of soul, and the purity of his virgin heart. "He that hath cleanness of heart, shall have the King for his friend."

The love of Jesus for John was heartily reciprocated by His disciple. There are three circumstances in which the intense affection of the disciple for his Master was made manifest. At the Last Supper, John had the privilege of sitting next to Jesus, and of reclining on His breast, where he drank draughts of love from its divine fountain. During the supper, our Savior predicted that one of His disciples at table would betray Him. The Apostles were agitated and distressed by this announcement, and they began secretly to debate among themselves which of them might be the traitor. Peter whispered to John, as being the most familiar with Christ, request-

ing him to ask our Lord who would betray Him. John's affection made him familiar with his Master, and his familiarity gave him freedom of speech. Let us love our Lord like John, and our love will prompt us to speak to Him with freedom of speech in prayer. Let us also imitate the beloved disciples by reclining in spirit on the breast of Jesus, in devoutly receiving the Holy Communion.

John also manifested his love for his Master when he stood by the cross at the crucifixion with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. He was the only Apostle that witnessed the crucifixion. All the others had sought refuge in flight. He showed a deeper affection for Christ in witnessing His death, and in sharing in the ignominy of the cross, than when he reclined on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper. Does not the faithful wife exhibit a greater devotion and loyalty to her husband, by attending him through a lingering illness, than she would manifest by sharing in his social and political triumphs?

"Jesus," says à Kempis, "has many followers of His heavenly Kingdom, but few bearers of His cross." We would all like to contemplate with John the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor, and to have some of the heavenly rays descend upon ourselves; but we would shrink from standing by Him at His cross on Mount Calvary, and from sharing in the humiliation of His death. We would like to lean with John on His breast, at the Last Supper, but we would not wish to drink with Him of the chalice of His sufferings.

Let us remember that there can be little or no charity without some self-sacrifice. Self-love is the enemy of benevolence. If there were more self-denial, there would be more love. Seneca

says: "Take two words from the lexicon, and there will be perfect concord among men, and no more war. These words are mine and thine." Kindness and generosity to others generally involve some self-restraint on our part. You have to put yourself to some inconvenience in order to direct an inquirer to the street he is looking for, or to accommodate him to a seat beside you in the car, or in the church. But life itself is made up of these little amenities and acts of courtesy and kindness.

John also manifested a genuine love for Jesus by adopting Mary as his mother and taking her to his home. We can not show a more practical love for Christ than by loving those whom He loved, and by caring for those whom He has commended to our charity. Imitate the beloved disciple by casting around you the searching eye of benevolence and sheltering some disconsolate widow who does not make a profession of beggary, and who is ashamed to obtrude herself before the public gaze. Bring sunshine to her home and joy to her heart. Fulfill towards her the sublime mission of God's almoner and steward, and the rays of joy you will bring her will descend upon yourself. You will enjoy the inestimable peace that springs from the consciousness of doing good to others. Love your Lord with a filial love as your Father. Love Him with a grateful love as your benefactor. Love Him like Magdalen and Peter with a repentant love, as having washed away your sins in His blood. Love Him with a compassionate love, as having suffered and died that you might live. Say with the Apostle: "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." [1]

[1] Gal. ii., 20.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF OUR ORDINARY ACTIONS.

Col. III., 12-17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

IN contemplating the works of nature, we gaze with admiration upon the great things of creation. We admire the sun, the moon, and the countless stars in the firmament. We behold, with ceaseless wonder, the illimitable expanse of the heavens, the boundless ocean, the lofty mountains. All these objects fill us with awe, because of their vastness.

But there is another world about and beneath us that escapes our attention. There are myriads of animalcula floating in the air, moving in the waters, and living in the earth under our feet, which we rarely think of, because they are invisible to the naked eye. They have a heart and other organs adapted to their manner of life; and we may judge how immeasurably small these organs must be, since the creatures themselves are invisible to the eye.

Now these infinitesimal living atoms proclaim the glory and omnipotent power of God as well as the leviathan of the ocean or the colossal works of nature. For it is only by the creative power of the Almighty that they pass from nothingness into being.

The same truth applies to men who have achieved great renown in the moral and religious

world. We extol some pulpit orator who has swayed multitudes by the charm of his eloquence, but our eyes are closed to the moral heroes of the unobserved world. How little thought we give to the unseen virtues that are practised among us! How little attention we bestow on the humble missionary who silently makes the daily rounds of his parish, bringing sunshine to the home of affliction, and pouring the balm of consolation on the bleeding heart, sitting for hours in the confessional, and listening to the sad stories of sin and sorrow, absolving the penitent and sending him away with a light heart and untroubled conscience, purifying and sanctifying over again the living temple of the soul, infinitely more precious in the sight of God than Solomon's temple.

The praise of St. Paul has resounded throughout the Christian world on account of his matchless eloquence and the nations he converted to Christianity. But it was not chiefly his apostolic preaching that endeared him to the Lord, but rather his private mortifications and his intense love for his neighbor. "I chastise my body," he says, "and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway."[1] He says again: "If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."[2]

St. Andrew, another Apostle, was specially dear to Christ. He enjoyed the friendship and confidence of his Master. He was the first convert among the Apostles. He had the privilege of introducing to our Savior his brother, Simon, and several others. Yet there is no record in the Gospel that he ever made a convert or wrought a mir-

[1] I. Cor. ix., 27. [2] *Ibid.* xiii., 1.

acle. His good deeds are hidden from the world, as far as the Scripture narrative is concerned.

These remarks lead me up to the following most instructive and consoling maxim laid down by our Lord and St. Paul, and enforced by the lives of the saints, that our sanctification and salvation do not depend upon extraordinary achievements, but upon the faithful discharge of our ordinary actions, which usually escape public observation. By ordinary actions, I mean our private and public exercises of devotion, our daily business or domestic employments, our meals, conversations and recreations.

I hold that you can sanctify each of these actions, and that your destiny in the life to come depends upon the manner in which you will have acquitted yourselves of them. God will not ask you on the last day what post you occupied, what duties you performed, but how you executed them. He will not inquire whether you were king or clown on the stage of life, but how you acted your part. And yet I am persuaded that a very large number of persons lose sight of this important truth. How many imagine that it is only religious occupations, technically so called, that are meritorious, and that the material actions of eating and drinking, working and conversing, have no influence whatever on our salvation. How many, therefore, perform these acts in a purely mechanical way, without any reference to God or to the intention which should actuate us. The old Christians put this thought in succinct language when they said: "*Laborare est orare.*" Labor is prayer when piously directed.

St. Paul assures us that God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the

truth.[1] Again he says: "This is the will of God, your sanctification." Nay, our Lord commands you to put no limits to your perfection, for He says by His Apostle: "Let him that is just be justified still more: let him that is holy be sanctified still more." But God could have no such desire for our sanctification, unless He intended that it could be purchased by the diligent execution of our ordinary common-place duties; for the number of men whose exploits are thought worthy of being heralded by the trumpet of fame, is very small. Most of the deeds of men are witnessed only by the all-seeing eye of God. As in an army there are but few generals compared with the rank and file, as in the Church there are but few Bishops and Pastors compared with the number of the laity, so also among the daily actions of men there are but few that rise above the ordinary level.

Yes, be thoroughly convinced that to save your soul and to become a shining light in God's kingdom, you are not called upon to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land; you are not obliged to visit the tombs of the Apostles, or to work miracles, or to shed your blood for the faith, or to convert nations; but you are merely required to maintain with fidelity the post assigned to you by Providence.

The words that Moses addressed to the Hebrew people, may be aptly applied to the present subject: "This commandment," he says, "that I command thee this day, is not above thee nor far off from thee; nor is it in Heaven that thou shouldst say: which of us can go up to Heaven to bring it unto us? nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayest excuse thyself and say: which of us can cross the sea and bring it unto us, that we may hear and do

[1] I. Tim. ii., 4.

that which is commanded? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart."[1] Yes, your sanctification is within your reach. It is connected with the conscientious fulfillment of those duties which Providence has assigned to you.

Witness the foster-father of our Lord, the great St. Joseph. There are no eminent deeds recorded of him. He neither converted nations nor wrought miracles. His elevation to glory was the fruit of those domestic virtues which marked his life in his quiet home at Nazareth.

When our Lord commends the faithful steward in the Gospel, no allusion is made to any sublime actions that he performed, or to any important and complex missions that were intrusted to him. He is rewarded solely for his diligent compliance with his stewardship: "Well done," he says, "good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over few things, I will set thee over many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

The Holy Ghost pronounces the eulogy of the valiant woman in the Old Testament: "Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her." What does the Spirit of God commend in her? He does not praise her for her social triumphs. He does not refer to her as an eloquent advocate of female suffrage, and of other ambitious claims of her sex. No, but He admires her because of her domestic virtues. She was a devoted wife, an affectionate mother, a benevolent mistress of her servants. "She looked well to the paths of her house, and did not eat her bread in idleness."[2]

God, says St. Augustin made the angels in Heaven and the worms of the earth. His creative power is as much displayed in the formation of

[1] Deut. xxx., 14. [2] Prov. xxxi., 27.

the vile insect as in the creation of the angel. And in like manner, His glory and our sanctification are not better promoted by the most brilliant achievement than by the most secret and insignificant moral act. Both are weighed in the scales of the sanctuary, and that act weighs heavier which is performed with the most upright disposition.

When the traveler in Palestine is approaching Mount Lebanon, he admires in the distance, the tall, majestic cedars that crown the summit of the mountain. The grass that grows around the trees is beneath his notice. When he reaches the Mount, all the comfort the trees afford him is shelter from the rays of the sun, while the grass supplies abundant pasture to his hungry beast of burden. The gifts which nature dispenses most abundantly, such as air, light and water, are most essential to life.

It is so with respect to our actions. The most common-place are generally the most useful. Those ordinary courtesies of social life, those little acts of Christian politeness and charity which are scarcely noticed, and little virtues of self-denial, are often more serviceable than the most brilliant achievements. They make life more agreeable and knit more closely the bonds of social and family relations.

Read the Sermon on the Mount. To whom are the beatitudes of Heaven promised? Not to those who have preached, and wrought miracles, and converted nations, but to those who have overcome the triple concupiscence of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is a serious reflection for ministers of the Gospel, that the very sacred and sublime mission of preaching, by which we raise your hearts to Heaven, may prove a snare and a

stumbling-block to us by exciting in us thoughts of vanity and self-complacency.

What does our Lord declare? "Many will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name?" Have we not preached and cast out devils in the Sacrament of Penance and wrought miracles of mercy in Thy name? "And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you."[1] Our sacred profession will not avail us, if our lives do not correspond with our words. "For a most severe judgment will be for them that bear rule."

There are others who estimate the merit of a gift in the cause of charity or religion by its bulk or material quantity. But this is not the judgment of Christ. Our Savior once "looking on, saw the rich men cast their gifts into the treasury," to defray the expense of divine worship. "And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in two mites. And He said: Verily I say unto you that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God, but she of her want hath cast in all the living that she had."[2] It is therefore the disposition of the giver, rather than the value of the gift, that constitutes its merit.

Persons of limited means have sometimes said to me: If I were a millionaire, I would endow a university or a hospital. These hypothetical protestations of generosity do not afford much comfort. And I observe that such conditional benefactors do not usually imitate the poor widow by making even small offerings according to their means. As they are exempted by necessity from

[1] Matt. vii., 22. [2] Luke xxi., 4.

contributing abundantly, they exempt themselves by choice from contributing a little.

Know, then, my Brethren, that perfection is made up of little things well performed. Michael Angelo was once engaged in executing a marble statue of a gentleman. The patron one day called on the artist in his studio, and was surprised to find how slowly he had progressed in his work. "What have you done," he asked, "since I was here last?" "Oh," replied the sculptor, "I have retouched this part, polished that; I have softened this feature, have brought out that muscle, have given more expression to that lip, and more energy to that limb." "But these are trifles," said the gentleman. "Yes, but trifles go to make perfection, and perfection, I assure you, is no trifle." Remember, then, that those little acts of devotion, of Christian courtesy and charity, which you are daily called upon to practice, may be trifles, but they are trifles which form the perfect man, and a perfect man is the noblest work of God.

But it is evident that our daily, common-place actions, to be meritorious, must be performed with proper dispositions. As reasonable beings and as Christians, we should execute our daily duties with close attention of mind and an upright intention of heart. We should observe the wise maxim of the ancients: "Age quod agis." Do well what you do. We should perform each act as if it were the only one assigned to us, or as if it were the last act of our lives.

Yet every one of us is subject to distractions which impertinently obtrude themselves upon us and divide our attention. And these distractions are very wily and insidious, and always present themselves as benevolent visitors,—especially in moments of prayer. The merchant never mental-

ly strikes a better bargain, than when he is at prayer. The lawyer never pleads the cause of his client more eloquently than when he is in the midst of his devotions. The doctor never diagnoses the disease of his patient more thoroughly than when he is kneeling before the altar.

And even we clergymen and heralds of the Gospel, while engaged in the pious exercise of meditation, are sometimes beguiled into the temptation of applying to the faithful the admonitions which are intended only for our own amendment. We are unconsciously preaching to others instead of to ourselves. Such is the infirmity of our nature, and the influence of distractions. I have heard of an eminent divine, the author of several theological works, that he made a vow never to make use of any inspiration or theological solution that was suggested to him in time of prayer.

We should endeavor to perform all our actions with an upright intention, having in view God's honor, and the interests of truth, justice and charity. Our Savior, treating of this subject, says: "The light of thy body is thine eye. If thine eye be single, the whole body shall be lightsome. If thine eye be evil, the whole body shall be darksome."[1] By the body, our Lord understands the action, and the eye is the intention which directs it. Your action, though good in itself, is vitiated by a bad motive. And an action, how indifferent soever, is ennobled and sanctified by a righteous intention. As the government stamp gives a value to a coin of the basest metal, so does an upright intention affix the royal seal of divine approbation on the smallest deliberate act.

St. Charles Borromeo was once taking his recreation with some companions, and in the course

[1] Matt. vi., 22.

of the conversation the question was asked what should be done if the hour of judgment had come. One said he would fall on his knees, and repent of his sins. Another said he would hasten to confession. When the turn of Charles came, he remarked: I would continue my recreation, for I began it in God's name, and in His honor I would end it.

Resolve, then, to make every morning an oblation of your actions to God. This daily consecration will sanctify your life. It will give a certain holy impulse to all your work. Sell the fruit of your mental and physical labor as dearly as possible. Then all your days will be full. Then though your life is short it will be full of merit. Then every act will be a prayer which will pierce the clouds. It will be a sacrifice most pleasing to the Lord. Then not only will your daily devotions be sanctified, but also your secular duties and domestic employments,—your meals, your recreations, your conversations. Then even in the unconscious hours of nightly repose, you will be drawing nearer to your heavenly home, like a sleeping passenger on shipboard who is impelled by favorable winds, and finds himself in the morning nearer to his destined harbor. You can say with the Psalmist: "In peace will I sleep and take my rest, for Thou, O Lord, hast settled me in hope." You will be fulfilling the counsel of the Apostle: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all for the glory of God." "Whatever you do in word or in work, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

SECONDARY CAUSES OF THE GROWTH OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

I. THES. I., 2-10.

IN another sermon[1] I spoke of the rapid growth and development of the Christian religion in the days of the Apostles and in the centuries immediately following. I asserted that the expansion and enduring vitality of the Church must be regarded as miraculous. For while all human institutions and governments are subject to the law of birth, development, decay and death, the religion of Christ maintains her vigor unimpaired. The primary cause of her marvellous continuity and expansion, must, of course, be ascribed to the promise made by Christ to His Apostles when He said: "Go, teach all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." But as Almighty God works His wonders through human instruments and secondary causes, it may be interesting and instructive to us to consider some of the leading agencies which, under the influence of God's grace, operated so powerfully in the diffusion of the Christian religion in the early period of the Church.

The first and most efficacious influence may be attributed to the sublime and beautiful teachings of Christianity. The Christian religion proclaimed then, as it does now, doctrines which satisfied the highest aspiration of the human intellect, and gratified the legitimate cravings of the human heart. It solved religious problems which had

[1] Trinity Sunday.

baffled the researches of the most profound philosophers of pagan antiquity, and which bewilder the investigations of the thinkers of our day who are not guided by the light of revelation.

First—The Christian religion gave the pagan world a rational idea of God. It proclaimed a God essentially one, existing from eternity to eternity. It proclaimed a God who created all things by His power, who governs all things by His wisdom, and whose superintending Providence watches over the affairs of nations as well as of men, without whom not even a bird can fall to the ground. It spoke of a God infinitely just, infinitely merciful, infinitely holy, infinitely wise. This idea of a Supreme Being so consonant to our intellectual conceptions, was in striking contrast with the low, debasing and sensual notions which the pagan world ascribed to its divinities.

Second—The religion of Christ not only gave man a sublime notion of his Creator, but gave him also a rational idea about himself. Hitherto man was a mystery and a riddle to himself. He knew not whence he came, or whither he was going. He was groping in the dark; the past and the future were, for him, buried in impenetrable darkness. The religion of Christ imparted to him a knowledge of his origin and his destiny, and the means of attaining it. It rescued him from the frightful labyrinth of error in which Paganism had involved him.

What light and joy Christian revelation was to those who were walking in the darkness of Paganism may be inferred from the sagacious speech of the English Thane to Edwin, King of Northumbria. When Edwin had deliberated in 627 about following the example of his wife Ethelburga, by embracing Christianity, he convoked an assembly

of his counsellors. One of them thus spoke: "Often, O King, in the depth of winter, while you are feasting with your Thanes, and the fire is blazing on the hearth in the midst of the hall, you have seen a sparrow pelted by the storm enter at one door and escape at the other. During its passage it was visible, but whence it came or whither it went, you know not. Such seems to me to be the life of man. He walks the earth for a few years, but what precedes his birth, or what is to follow after death, we can not tell. Undoubtedly, if this new religion can unfold these important secrets, it must be worthy of our attention, and ought to be followed." [1]

The Christian religion gave not only light to man's intellect, but peace also to his heart. It brought him that peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, and which springs from the conscious possession of the truth. It communicated to him a triple peace. It taught him how to have peace with God, by the observance of His commands, peace with his neighbor, by fulfilling the law of justice and charity, and peace with himself, by keeping his passions subject to reason, and reason obedient to the light of faith.

Third—Another distinguishing feature of the religion of Christ which attracted the admiration and sympathy of the masses, was its all-embracing mission, and its appeal to the universal human race, without distinction of rank or condition. In this respect, it differed from all other religions that had preceded it. They were all local and national in their character, the creatures of the state.

The religion of Christ, on the contrary, was cosmopolitan, world-wide, universal, restricted by no state lines or national boundaries. Christ came as

[1] Bede, B. ii., c. 13.

the world's physician. He alone could feel the pulse of humanity, and ascribe to each man the remedies to assuage his fever, and restore him to spiritual vigor. Like the air of heaven, which ascends the highest mountain, and descends down to the deepest valley, everywhere purifying the face of nature, the Gospel permeated every rank and grade of society, diffusing everywhere a healthy moral atmosphere. It had a message for master and man, for rich and poor. "To the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and unwise, I am a debtor," said the Apostle. Without rudely dissolving the relations between master and slave, it admonished the *master* to be kind and humane to his slave, reminding him that he had a Master in Heaven who has no respect for persons. It taught the *slave* to be docile to his master. It cheered him by the comforting thought that he was not a mere animated machine, or a chattel, but that he was endowed with an immortal soul, and was a child of God. It gradually relaxed the severity of his bondage, till the chains fell from his feet.

It "charged the *rich* not to be high-minded, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, to do good, to become rich in good works."[1] It comforted the *poor man* by the old, old, but never tiresome story of a God who became poor for our sakes, that by His poverty we might be rich. It held out to all the blessed promises of eternal life, and of a happiness which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man was capable of conceiving.

But besides these intrinsic claims which Christianity exhibited, there was another cause that contributed powerfully to the Christian religion.

[1] Tim. vi., 17.

I refer to the *irreproachable lives* of the primitive Christians, some of whom are thus portrayed by the Apostle in this day's Epistle: "Ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Spirit: so that ye became a model to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia." The pagan world saw with admiration the great moral change that the religion of Christ had wrought in the hearts of their converted brethren. They saw that amidst licentiousness and sensuality, the Christians remained pure and chaste. Like the children in the fiery furnace, their robes of innocence were not scorched by the flames of wantonness which surrounded them. Amid drunkenness and debauchery, they remained sober and abstemious. Amid injustice, rapine and overreaching, they were not only strictly just, but they distributed with a ready hand, their goods to their suffering brethren. While the Pagans fled with horror from the breath of pestilence, the Christians nursed and buried their plague stricken friends, and even their enemies. No wonder, as Tertullian remarks, that the enemies of Christianity were forced to exclaim: "Behold how these Christians love, and are ready to die for one another." In a word, amid contempt and calumny, insults and persecutions, the Christians maintained an invincible patience, and confronted death itself, not only with sublime fortitude, but even with serene joy. The public were convinced that a tree which bore such celestial fruit, must have been planted by the hand of God Himself. They saw, and they believed.

The primitive Christians aided the Apostles not only by their edifying example, but also by their zealous *co-operation.* They were all missionaries on a limited scale. They were ever ready to give

an account of the faith and the hope that were in them. The more enlightened lay converts, like Tertullian, Justin the Martyr, and Lactantius vindicated the claims of Christianity by learned treatises. The merchant was a traveling missionary. Together with his wares, he brought a knowledge of Christ to the houses which he entered. The soldier preached Christ in the camp. The captive slave preached Him in the mines. The believing wife made known the Gospel to her unbelieving husband, and the believing husband to his unbelieving wife: and thus, as all nature silently, though eloquently, proclaims the existence and glory of God, so did the whole Christian family unite in magnifying the name and in proclaiming the Divine mission of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us now bring home to ourselves these historical facts which I have set before you, and let us make a practical application of them to ourselves. The Gospel which is preached in our day brings to you the same blessed message of light and peace and hope that it brought to the primitive Christians. It reveals to you the same knowledge of God and of yourselves, and the same eternal heritage that it revealed to them. The seed of the word of God is the same. Would to God that I could say the same of the soil into which it is cast.

Our forefathers eagerly embraced Christianity at the risk, and often at the sacrifice, of their lives. No such sacrifice is exacted of you. But it is just because our faith costs us so little that we do not esteem it at its due value. The father who amasses a fortune by his own individual exertion appreciates his wealth far more than the son who falls heir to it. We are the heirs of this

blessed Kingdom, and how many, alas! are there who let it slip from their hands, and who, like Esau, sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage. *Let us preserve* this treasure of *faith* as the apple of our eye.

But your faith should not only adorn your own person; it should also diffuse its heavenly perfume among those with whom you are thrown in family or social relations. We need your help. We have seen what valuable and efficient aid the primitive Christian laity rendered to the Apostles in propagating the Gospel. And if the Apostles, with all their piety, zeal and grace, fresh from the inspiring presence of their master, could not have accomplished what they did without the help of the laity, how can we, ministers of the Gospel, who cannot lay claim to their piety, or zeal, or eloquence—how can we hope to spread the light of the Gospel without your earnest concurrence?

How are you to co-operate with us? First, by the open and manly profession of your faith, by "being always ready to satisfy every one that asketh you, a reason for that hope which is in you."[1] While you will accord to those who differ from you the right of expressing and maintaining their religious opinions, you must claim for yourselves the same privilege. You ask for nothing more; you will be content with nothing less. And surely, if there is in this world, anything of which you ought to be justly proud, it is this: that you are members of the religion of Christ.

In the days of pagan Rome's imperial splendor, the Roman said with pride: I am a Roman citizen. This was his noblest title. It was a title that even St. Paul claimed and vindicated when he was threatened with the ignominious punishment of

[1] I. Pet. iii.

scourging. The Roman was proud of the Republic, because it was venerable in years, because of the vast extent of its domain, and because of the valor of its soldiers and the wisdom of its statesmen. And if the Roman was proud of being a Roman citizen, if you are proud of claiming the title of American citizens, how much more should you glory in being citizens of the Republic of the Church?

Do you seek for antiquity of origin? Nearly 2,000 summers have already rolled over her head, and she is to-day as fresh and vigorous as when she issued from the cenacle of Jerusalem. Time writes no wrinkles on her heavenly brow. She has seen the birth of every dynasty of Europe, and it is not impossible that she may witness the death of them all and chant their requiem.

Do you seek for wide expanse of territory? Her spiritual dominion extends over the surface of the globe. Where will you find a wisdom comparable to that of her saints? Theirs is a wisdom born, not of man, but of God. And where will you find a heroism so sublime as that of her martyrs? Theirs is a heroism not aroused by the sound of martial music, or by the clash of arms in the battle field, or by a lust for fame, or by the emulation of comrades, but a heroism inspired by a love for God and their fellow-beings.

You can co-operate with us by your generous offerings in the cause of religion and charity, by helping us to build up the walls of Jerusalem and by contributing to the decency and splendor of Divine worship.

Above all, you can co-operate with us by the rectitude of your private lives and the influence of your example: "Having your conversation good among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak

of you as evil doers, considering you by your good works, they may glorify God in the day of visitation."[1] When God visits them by the light of His grace, and removes from their eyes the scales of prejudice, your virtues will shine resplendent before them. "Let your light, then, so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven."

[1] I. Peter ii., 12.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE RACE FOR AN UNFADING CROWN.

I. Cor. ix., 24.

ST. PAUL, in the Epistle from which I have read, is writing to the Corinthians, and he calls their attention to the Olympic games which took place in Corinth and other cities of ancient Greece. Among those games, there was one in which a number of athletes entered the lists as contestants in a foot race. These competitors, as the Apostle remarks, were subjected to a very severe regimen several days before the race began. They were compelled to eat sparingly, and were restricted to the plainest and coarsest food, being forbidden all kinds of delicacies. They were obliged to abstain from sensual gratifications which were calculated to weaken their bodies and lessen their chances of success. The victorious competitor was crowned with laurels by the judges, and was greeted with the plaudits of the multitude.

St. Paul, with admirable tact, takes occasion to remind his dear Corinthians, that they also are candidates for a prize, that they too have a race to run — a race immeasurably more important than that of the Olympic exercises. He tells them that the term of their lives is the length of the race which they have to run, that death is the goal, that their degree of sanctity is the measure of their speed, that the invisible angels and saints are the spectators of the contest, that God Himself is their Judge, and that a crown of immortal glory is their recompense.

Now, if these contestants, adds the Apostle, abstain from enervating pleasures and sensual gratifications for the sake of a little temporal glory, will you refuse to lead a life of self-denial and holiness, O Corinthians—you who have a higher and more lasting reward to expect? "Every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things, and they, indeed, that they may gain a corruptible crown, we an incorruptible one."

Let me present to you another illustration with which you are more familiar. I refer to our quadrennial Presidential elections. Although four years will elapse before another election, there are already several prospective candidates in the field. One evening, a few months ago, in Washington, I had the honor of conversing separately with six distinguished statesmen, all of whom are available candidates for the Presidency. I found them all in a receptive mood, and any one of them, in my judgment, would fill the office with credit to himself and with honor to his country.

Every candidate that is to be nominated will leave no stone unturned to insure his victory. Hundreds of thousands of dollars will be expended where they will do the most good. An army of campaign orators will advocate the claims of their respective champions in every part of the country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande. All the candidates will be compelled to stand on the pillory, to be lashed with the scourge of vituperation. Their family history will be searched, and all their short-comings and those of their forefathers will be laid bare. And if the record is not dark enough, it will be blackened by the brush of calumny. Indeed, a man never discovers what an unmitigated

miscreant he is, till he has the temerity to run for a public office. O, my brethren, if you and I were to endure so much for the crown of eternal glory as others suffer for political preferment, we would be regarded as idiots or fanatics.

Now I observe three important points of difference between the candidates for Presidential honors and the aspirants to the Kingdom of Heaven.

First—The Presidential candidates know from the very outset that only one of them will be successful, and that all the others will be defeated, and all their efforts thrown away: "All run, but only one receiveth the prize." But the candidates for immortal glory can *all* be victorious, if they make the proper exertions. The victory of one does not involve the defeat of the others. The Apostle implies this in his Epistle. He does not say: So run ye that *one* may obtain. But he does say: "So run ye that *you* (all) may obtain." Our heavenly Father has crowns ready for each of you. His prizes are inexhaustible. Again, he says: "I run not as at an uncertainty. I so fight, not as one beating the air." I know that "there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me on that day, and not to me only, but to them also who love His coming."[1]

Second—The successful candidate for the Presidency enjoys his honors only for four short years, after which he retires to the obscurity of private life. But the candidate for heavenly honors inherits an eternal recompense. "They, indeed, receive a corruptible crown, we, an incorruptible one." "Your joy no man shall take from you."

Third—The Presidential honors, even while they last, are full of cares and anxieties. The more

[1] II. Tim. iv.

precious the crown, the more heavily it presses on the brow of him that wears it. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." The cares even of a Pope are poorly compensated by the splendor of a tiara. Pope Adrian IV., the only English Pontiff that sat on the Chair of Peter, opened his heart one day to a friend, and said to him: "In my cell I had tasted happiness, but in my ascent to greatness, at every step I have been harassed by additional cares. Observers might deem the tiara a shining crown, but I find it a burning one."

And I, myself, can testify, for I was an eye-witness of the scene which I describe. I can bear witness that Cardinal Sarto, Patriarch of Venice, (now Pius X), when he saw that he was threatened with the burden of the Papacy, with tears in his eyes, made a most earnest and pathetic appeal to his colleagues to be relieved from a yoke too heavy for him to bear.

On the other hand, the joys of the victorious aspirants to an unfading crown are without any alloy of bitterness or solicitude: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor wailing, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[1]

But you will say to me: It is impossible for me to attain that sanctity which you commend; the temptations incident to my business or professional affairs, and my domestic vexations, are an insuperable barrier to that purity of soul, and tranquillity of heart which are essential to union with God. I would have to retire from active life in order to escape my daily delinquencies. I am a *merchant,* for instance; I am tempted to overestimate the value of my goods. If I do not exagger-

[1] Apoc. xxi.

ate their cost, I am in danger of losing my customers, and of being overreached by an enterprising rival in the trade. I am a *lawyer;* I am tempted to encourage my client's suit, though I regard the case as a hopeless one. I am a *physician;* I have to deal with some patients whose only disease is a morbid imagination. I am disposed to humor them, and to prescribe some nostrum, or some negative pills, which cannot remove a disease that does not exist. I am a *contractor,* and the competition has been so close that I feel inclined to use inferior materials in the construction of the building. Or, I am in the service of others, and for lack of what I consider a just compensation for my labor, I am tempted to appropriate to my own use the funds of my employers. Or, there is a member of my family of so disagreeable a temper that I am habitually irritated and provoked to resentment.

In answer to these several excuses, I can say, that there is no trade, or business, or profession, or honest avocation, which is essentially at variance, or incompatible with, the integrity of Christian life. For, God "wishes all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," [1] and we know that there is no salvation without sanctification.

When John the Baptist was preaching the Gospel of penance along the banks of the Jordan, among those who went to hear him were soldiers and tax-gatherers. Now there is no class of persons more exposed to the temptation of deeds of violence and injustice than military men and collectors of tribute. They asked John what they should do to be saved. Did John command them to renounce their calling? Did he say to them:

[1] I. Tim. ii.

"Give up your business." "Get ye to a monastery." "Become hermits with me in the desert?" By no means. He simply exhorted them to live within their lines of duty, and to abstain from injustice and oppression.

To pursue this subject a little further. Two elements are essential and sufficient for a life of righteousness. 1st. The grace of God. 2d. The correspondence of our own free will with His grace.

God's grace will never be wanting to us. To every one He says what He declared to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee." And each one of us can say with the same Apostle: "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." God bestows His grace on each of us according to our respective needs and conditions. "There are diversities of graces," says St. Paul, "but the same Spirit: there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord: there are diversities of operations, but one God, who worketh all in all." The same God that gives me grace to perform my ministerial functions gives you grace to fulfill your daily avocations of life. The same God that sanctifies my prayer, sanctifies your labor. Labor is prayer when it is consecrated to God. The same Holy Spirit that hallows the contemplative life of Mary, spiritualizes also the active life of Martha.

God has endowed each of you with the gift of free will. We hear now and then of persons being betrayed into sin by hypnotic influences; but neither men nor devils can hypnotize your will so long as you resist them. Man may assail and destroy the temple of the body, but your free will, enshrined in the sanctuary of the soul, is beyond his reach, unless you voluntarily surrender it.

Herod had power to bind John the Baptist, to

cast him into prison, and to cut off his head, but the will of the great Precursor bade defiance to the tyrant.

Even the pagan poet, Horace, declares that the just man who is tenacious of right principles, can not be swerved from the path of duty against his will: "Neither the shouts of the populace, nor the frown of the tyrant, nor the rage of the elements, nor Jove's thunderbolt, can shake him. Though the heavens fall, the ruins will strike him undismayed."

Sanctity, therefore, or integrity of Christian character, is not impossible. In the vocabulary of a Christian, there should be no such word as impossibility, when it is a question of personal righteousness. If holiness of life were beyond your reach, vain would be your hope, and vain would be my preaching. You would be wasting your time in coming to church and hearing the word of God.

God never commands impossibilities. He knows full well what you are capable of accomplishing. He knows the frail clay of which you are made. Now God commands each one of you to be holy: "Be ye holy," He says, "for I the Lord your God am holy." "This is the will of God your sanctification." He counsels you to aim even at perfection. "Be ye perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

I will even add that sanctity is not only practicable, but it is not so difficult as we imagine, when we consider the graces and helps at our disposal. "Take upon you My yoke," says our Lord, "for My yoke is sweet and My burden is light." Sweet is the yoke of the Gospel which Christ puts on us, and light is the burden which He bears with us. "This is the love of God," says St. John, "that

ye keep His commandments, and His commandments are not heavy." Who can despair of attaining salvation, which is the fruit of holiness, when he reads of the vision which John had of the elect in Heaven, all of whom were subject to our moral infirmities? "I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice saying: Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb."[1]

Have you not the assurance of God's help in the spiritual combat? And if God is with you, who can be against you? When the servant of Eliseus beheld an army with chariots and horses sent by the king of Syria to capture his master, he was filled with despair; but the man of God said to his servant: "Fear not, for there are more with us than with them." And the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he beheld a heavenly host surrounding the prophet of the Lord.[2] Fear not, brethren, though demons contend against you. The angels of God are fighting more powerfully for you. You have the same help that was given to the Saints in their earthly campaign, and they had to pass through the ordeal of temptations which now assail you.

Let us, therefore, be firm in will, and fervent and diligent in prayer, and ask of God the precious gift of holiness. Let us all determine to be successful candidates for the prize of an immortal crown, and take a fresh start to-day in that momentous race on which all is staked. In the words of St. Paul: "Forgetting the things that are be-

[1] Apoc. vii. [2] IV. Kings vi., 16.

hind, let us stretch forth to those that are before, and press towards the mark, to the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus." [1]

[1] Phil. iii., 13. 14.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

ST. PAUL.

II. Cor. xi., 19; xii., 10.

THERE is one sacred writer whose words are read more frequently in the churches than the utterances of any other inspired penman. I refer to the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It is, therefore, eminently proper that you should cultivate the acquaintance of that great man, and become more familiar with his extraordinary life and actions.

After Christ Himself, St. Paul is the most striking figure in the Christian Church. He is conspicuous by his marvellous conversion, conspicuous by his imperishable writings, by his matchless eloquence, conspicuous by his humility and greatness of soul, conspicuous by his contempt of human glory, his self-denial and love of sufferings, conspicuous by his miracles and supernatural visions, conspicuous by his love for God and his fellow-men.

Saul, as he was called before his conversion, was born in Tarsus in Cilicia in the beginning of the Christian era. He was a Hebrew in religion, and belonged to the strictest sect of Pharisees. He was a most unrelenting persecutor of the rising Church, and stood by, an approving spectator, when Stephen, the protomartyr, was stoned to death. While on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus, breathing vengeance against the Christians, he was suddenly arrested in his journey by a supernatural power. A light from Heaven shone

round about him; and falling on the ground, he heard a voice from the clouds saying to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And Saul said: "Who art thou, Lord?" And the voice answered: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." And Saul trembling replied: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And Saul arose completely blind, and by the command of Christ he was led to Damascus, to a Christian man named Ananias, by whom he was baptised, and immediately after his baptism his sight was restored.

St. Paul is conspicuous by his writings. Next to the Gospels of Jesus Christ, his fourteen Epistles form the most important and the most familiar portion of the Holy Scripture. They have been the delight and consolation of thousands of souls in every age and country. Many a great light, like St. Augustin, is indebted, under God, for his conversion, to the Epistles of St. Paul. These letters are a beautiful garden abounding in every kind of heavenly fruit, most delicious to the spiritual taste. And just as the manna which fell on the children of Israel in the desert adapted itself to the taste of each consumer, so do the letters of the Apostle accommodate themselves to the special wants of every pious reader.

But what tongue can adequately portray the eloquence of Paul—an eloquence that made princes tremble on their thrones, that swayed multitudes, and converted nations? St. Paul is the only Apostle that has received and that merits the glorious title of the Apostle of Nations. "There are three things," says St. Augustin, "that I would like to have witnessed in this world, if God had permitted it: Christ conversing in the flesh, Rome in the zenith of her imperial splendor, and Paul

thundering from the chair of truth." So captivating and inspiring was Paul's eloquence, that when the Pagan inhabitants of Lystra heard him speak, they imagined that he was Mercury, the God of eloquence, and they desired to offer sacrifice to him as to a divinity.

Paul was as distinguished for his virtues as for his gift of eloquence. One of the most striking traits exhibited in the life of the Apostle, is his profound humility of heart. In this respect he resembled his brother Apostle Peter. As Peter's cheeks were furrowed with tears because he had denied his Master, so was Paul's heart crushed with grief and humiliation by the reflection that he had persecuted his Savior. He avows that he is the greatest of sinners: "Jesus Christ," he says, "came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." He confesses himself a blasphemer and a persecutor of the Church of God. "I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I have persecuted the Church of God." Brethren, who should despair when he sees these two men, the one denying his Lord, the other blaspheming Him, afterwards becoming the two great columns of the Christian Church!

But St. Paul confirms, by his example, the truth that genuine humility is not only compatible with greatness of soul, but is inseparable from it. The truly humble man trusts not in the arm of the flesh, but in the justice of his cause, and in the protection of Heaven. "Gladly," cries out the Apostle, "will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may dwell in me." He spoke of himself when he said: "The weak things of this world hath God chosen that He might confound the strong, and the things that are contemptible,

and the things that are not, hath God chosen that He might confound the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His sight."

His magnanimity confronts us at every step. He always rises to the occasion. Neither the frowns of tyrants, nor the shouts of the populace, nor chains and prisons can terrify him or break his spirit. When he is brought to the court of Felix, the governor, he has the courage to preach to him on justice and chastity and a judgment to come. At these words Felix trembles on his throne. And well, indeed, might he tremble, for to justice and chastity he was a stranger, and a judgment to come he had reason to fear. When Paul is afterward led in chains before King Agrippa, he boldly proclaims his Christian faith in the midst of a hostile assembly. Agrippa is so deeply impressed with his words, that he exclaims: "Thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian." Then Paul, lifting up his withered and manacled hands, replies in language worthy of himself: "Would to God that not only thou, but also that all who hear me this day, should become such as I am, except these bonds."[1] When the chief captain threatened to scourge Paul, in order to gratify a frenzied mob, he indignantly protested against the outrage, declaring that he was a Roman citizen. The captain became alarmed, knowing that it was forbidden to scourge a Roman citizen, and in an apologetic tone, he said to the Apostle: "I also am a citizen. I have purchased this title with a great price." "And I," rejoins the Apostle, "am a citizen, not by purchase, but by birthright."

Another characteristic of St. Paul's life is his contempt of human glory, and his indifference to

[1] Acts xxvi.

popular opinion: "If I pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ." "As for me, it is of the least account to be judged by you, or by man's day. There is one who judgeth, that is the Lord."

His practice of self-denial and mortification is equally manifest: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest while I preach to others, I myself may become a reprobate." "With Christ I am nailed to the cross." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world."

But who can sufficiently describe his sufferings and privations in the course of his ministry? His whole public life, from his conversion to his martyrdom, is almost one continued scene of hardships. If we were to compare our penances with his tribulations, how they would pale into insignificance! In his second Epistle to the Corinthians, he thus describes his trials and vicissitudes: "From the Jews, five times I received forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A day and a night I spent in the depths of the sea. In journeying often. In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labor and distress, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness." [1]

But the crowning virtue of the Apostle of the Gentiles is his intense love for God, and for his fellow man. Paul never did anything by halves. He loved the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. Love was the motive

[1] II. Cor. xi.

power of his indomitable zeal and indefatigable labor. Our labor for a cause is proportioned to our love for it. Where there is love, there is no labor, or if there is labor, the labor is loved. He smiled at tyrants and persecutions, at obstacles and privations. He looked on them with as much indifference as a traveler hastening to his wished-for home, regards the storms and rains he encounters in the road. See how his ardent devotion to Christ is shown in that sublime sentence in his Epistle to the Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[1]

The truest test of a love for God is found in a genuine affection for our neighbor: "If any man say: I love God, and hateth his neighbor, that man is a liar, and the truth is not in him: for if he loveth not his neighbor whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" So great was the sympathy of Paul for his Jewish brethren, that he was willing, if it were possible, to forego his eternal happiness that he might save them: "I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not, my conscience bearing me testimony in the Holy Spirit, that I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh."

And in that most eloquent description of fraternal charity, can we doubt that the Apostle was

[1] Rom. viii.

portraying himself? "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith so as to remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind, charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." [1]

Can we wonder that an Apostle who so ardently loved his God and his fellow-beings, who spent himself in the service of his Master, who laid so firmly the foundation of Christ's spiritual kingdom on earth, can we wonder, I say, that such a man should have so strong a hope and confidence in the rewards of eternal life? This hope ripened and bloomed into absolute certainty, as the term of his life drew nigh. More than once he expresses this assurance: "I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep my deposit unto that day."

Shortly before his death he exclaimed: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will give unto me on that day."

St. Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, exhorted not only the members of the royal family, and the attendants at court, but also artisans

[1] I. Cor. xiii.

and laborers, to peruse the Epistles of St. Paul. I impart most earnestly the same counsel to you. On Sundays you listen to fragments of these Epistles. But, oh, how much you miss in not hearing the whole! If you heard a page of a letter from a dear relative or friend, you would be impatient until you had read it all. Read the Epistles through and through. Read a chapter every day.

Do you seek for Divine knowledge? You will find it there. Do you seek for the manna of spiritual consolation? You will find it there in abundance. You will receive a share in the Apostle's spirit and virtues, and you will enjoy, I hope, hereafter, a share in his glory.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

CHRISTIAN MANHOOD.

I. Cor. xiii., 1-13. "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things."

IN commenting on the life of our divine Savior, we are usually inclined to lay particular stress on His tenderness of heart, His amiable disposition, His meekness of character, and His compassion for suffering humanity. This is, indeed, as it should be, for these affectionate qualities shone forth conspicuously in the life of our blessed Redeemer.

But, in gazing so intently on these sweet-tempered traits of our Lord, are we not apt to overlook His sturdy manhood and force of character? If Christ is called the "Lamb of God," He is also called the "Lion of the fold of Juda." If He exhibits the meekness of a lamb when He is led before His judges and His executioners, He displays the courage of a lion when He confronts the Scribes and Pharisees. He rebukes their hypocrisy, and He tears off the mask and exposes them in all their hideous deformity. Those eyes that were moistened with tears of compassion at the tomb of Lazarus, flash with righteous indignation when He denounces the desecration of God's temple. The hand that was habitually raised to bless innocent youth and repentant sinners, is lifted up to smite the money changers that profaned His Father's house.

I propose to speak to you this morning on the

subject of *Christian Manhood.* My remarks will be specially addressed to young men and women, though they will not be misapplied if the adults of both sexes are included.

The question may be asked: What is the greatest need of our times for the betterment of Christian society? Is it churches? Temples of worship are, indeed, very necessary. The construction of elegant and well-adorned houses of worship is an evidence of the faith and devotion of the people. But they are not the most essential thing for our day. The primitive Christians paid homage to God in the catacombs, and some of our forefathers adored their Lord under the canopy of heaven, in secluded mountains and in caves of the earth; and they were the best of Christians. Moreover, what would be the use of churches, if we had no worshippers to frequent them?

Is it schools that are most needed? Christian schools are certainly demanded for the preservation of the faith and morals of the rising generation. A parish is not complete without a school. But they do not constitute the most essential requisite. There have been dark periods in the Church's history, when Christian schools were not tolerated, and their absence was supplied by heroic mothers who nourished the seeds of religion in the hearts of their children.

Is it hospitals and sanitariums that the times call for? Hospitals are indeed the landmarks of Christian civilization, and they contribute greatly to the alleviation of human suffering. But they do not constitute the greatest need of our day. They relieve the misery of only a small portion of the community.

Does the country need majestic and colossal state-houses for our legislative bodies? The Con-

vention that met in Philadelphia in 1787, to devise the most momentous Constitution ever framed for the civil guidance of man, assembled in a hall not conspicuous for its majestic proportions.

What is the greatest need of the times for churchmen themselves? Is it stately palaces that are required for her bishops and clergy? No, my brethren, external pomp does not augment the dignity, nor increase the influence of the hierarchy. "You ought to see what a splendid episcopal house we have for our Bishop," remarked a priest to a brother clergyman from a neighboring diocese. "And you," replied the clergyman, "ought to see what a splendid Bishop we have for our episcopal house." It is not the dwelling that ennobles the Bishop, but it is the Bishop that ennobles the dwelling.

What the times call for is *men,* sturdy Christian men, endowed with the courage of their convictions. We need men who are controlled by conscience rather than by expediency, men who are guided by principle rather than by popularity, men who are influenced by a sense of duty, and not by self-interest, who are swayed by a spirit of patriotism rather than by a desire of political preferment. Above all, we need men of strong Christian faith, who are prepared to uphold their religious convictions in the face of obloquy and popular prejudice. In a word, we need men and women of upright Christian character.

If you disclose to me your character, I will reveal to you your destiny. If your character is above reproach, you will win in the battle of life. You may not attain distinction in the civil or political, the military or ecclesiastical walks of life. But the acquisition of these honors is not a criterion of genuine success. The true test of

ultimate triumph lies in the fulfillment of duty. If you are faithful at the post to which Providence will assign you, no matter what that post may be, you will be successful in life. You will enjoy the testimony of a good conscience. You will merit the esteem of your fellow-citizens, and above all, you will have the approval of Heaven. Your name may not be emblazoned on the fading pages of earthly history, but what is infinitely better, it will be inscribed in the imperishable records of the Book of Life.

But this fidelity to religious and moral principles demands of us no small measure of heroic virtue. Many a soldier who fearlessly rushed to the cannon's mouth has quailed before the shafts of ridicule and the shouts of popular prejudice. The man who calmly fulfills a duty against public clamor, displays a higher courage than the general who captures cities.

Let me illustrate this point by a few examples. Some of you have, no doubt, read a book entitled "Tom Brown's School Days." George Arthur's noble character is well portrayed in that work. George's mother was a pious woman who inculcated in her son principles of Christian virtue. George went to Rugby with the fixed idea that religion was not to be put on like a holiday dress, but was to be worn in the school as well as in the nursery, abroad as well as at home. The first night he spent at Rugby he knelt down at his bedside to pray, according to custom, before retiring to sleep. Jeers and slippers were cast at him, but in spite of the jeers and slippers he went on with his prayers. No doubt his companions were secretly ashamed of themselves, and in their hearts they applauded their victim. George Arthur, on that occasion, performed a more heroic

act than an older companion would have accomplished in plunging into a river, to rescue a drowning comrade. For, George, in continuing his prayers, was actuated solely by a sense of religious duty, while the other youth, in leaping into the river, would have been impelled by the plaudits of the spectators.

When the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, David danced before it in pious enthusiasm. For, dancing was in those days, and is even now in some countries, a religious ceremony. Michol, David's wife, looking out through a window, and observing her husband, mocked and ridiculed him. And when she met him, she reproached him and said that he was playing the buffoon. David meekly replied: "Before the Lord who chose me, I will both play and will make myself meaner than I have done, and I will be little in mine own eyes," [1] for in so doing I discharge a religious obligation well pleasing to the Lord. Gregory the Great, in commenting upon this act of David, observes that the Royal Prophet performed on that occasion a more heroic deed than when he slew Goliath, and killed a lion. For, in smiting the giant and in killing the lion, he conquered an enemy, but in humbly dancing before the Ark, he conquered himself. If David was not ashamed to dance before the Ark of the Lord, let us not be ashamed, but rather let us always glory in kneeling before the Lord of the Ark in the face of incredulous scoffers.

Daniel O'Connell, the great Irish tribune, accepted, in his younger days, a challenge from a gentleman named D'Esterre, whom he killed in a duel. In his latter years, sobered by religion and reflection, he refused a second challenge. Now,

[1] II. Samuel vi.

O'Connell displayed greater manhood in declining a second duel than in engaging in the first one; for in consenting to fight he yielded to a depraved public opinion against the voice of conscience, while in refusing the second challenge he obeyed the dictates of conscience in defiance of popular clamor, which branded him as a coward.

Robert Wright, who was elected governor of Maryland in 1806, fought three duels, in each of which reluctantly accepting the challenge, for he was of a peaceable disposition; but he was unwilling to decline, lest he should be branded as a coward. After the third duel, a gentleman said to him: "You must be a very brave man to confront death three times." "Not so," replied the governor, "any coward can fight a duel, but it takes a very courageous man to beg another's pardon."

Human respect is a vice diametrically opposed to the virtue of Christian manhood. It is a base condescension, by which a man, either from the dread of offending others, or from the hope of conciliating their friendship and good will, speaks or acts against his own intimate convictions. The slave of human respect is like the idol mentioned by the Psalmist. He has eyes and sees not; he has ears and hears not; he has a mouth and speaks not. Or rather he sees through others' eyes; he hears through others' ears; he is the mouthpiece of others; he is a mere puppet echoing their sentiments. He tries to please men, which is right, but at the expense of his conscience, which is wrong. "If I would please men," (in violation of my conscience), says the Apostle, "I would not be the servant of Christ."

The fear of popular prejudice, when religion is concerned, is the most criminal form of moral cowardice, because it places the creature above

the Creator. "Many of the chief men," says St. John, "believed in Christ, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him. For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God."[1]

The man that acts up to his conscience has but one master, and that Master is God, "whom to serve is to reign." He enjoys the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But the slave of human opinion has as many masters as there are individuals whose censure he dreads, or whose smiles he secures at the expense of duty; and he is continually obliged to study their humor and disposition, that he may adapt his obsequious servility to their ever-changing caprice.

This class of men is thus characterized by a distinguished English writer: "He always meant to do what was right *in the eyes of the world.* He had no other rule of action but that which the world supplied. His religion was decorum—his sense of honor was regard to opinion. His heart was a dial to which the world was the sun. When the great eye of the public fell on it, it answered every purpose that a heart could answer. But when that eye was invisible, the dial was mute, a piece of brass and nothing more."

The slave of human respect is universally detested or despised. He is odious in the sight of God, since he stifles the heavenly voice of conscience from a servile fear of men. "No man can serve two masters, for he will love the one and hate the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other." We cannot at the same time serve the cause of righteousness and of self-interest. The slave of human respect is despicable in the sight of his fellow-beings, for how can they

[1] John xii.

respect a man who has not the manliness to speak and live up to his honest convictions? And must he not be contemptible in his own eyes when he looks into his heart and contemplates his dissimulation and cowardice laid bare before him?

The young and impressionable are especially liable to the danger of yielding to a depraved popular opinion. St. Augustin says in his "Confessions," that he was ashamed to be outdone in sin by his companions, not so much from an attachment to their vicious lives, as from the fear of incurring their contempt. He even sometimes boasted of having perpetrated evil deeds which he had not committed, that he might appear before them a greater hero in the field of crime.

The slave of human respect is a political weathercock. He changes his political creed to suit his selfish interests. He "holds with the hare and runs with the hounds." He is usually on the fence, ready to jump on the winning side. During the Civil War I read of a man who was traveling on a train going from the South to a northern state. It was customary in those days to canvass the political creed of the passengers. The man was aroused from his sleep, and the usual question was put to him. "Where am I?" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes. "You are in Pennsylvania," was the reply. Then he promptly proclaimed himself a Union man. Had he been waked up in Virginia, it is very probable that he would have avowed himself a Confederate.

The religious profession of these time-servers is controlled by their environment and associations rather than by their conscientious convictions. These individuals would be Catholics in Rome, Church of England men in London; they would be Lutherans in Berlin, members of the

Greek Church in St. Petersburg, and perhaps even Mohammedans in Constantinople. They become all things to all men, that they may gain all for themselves, and not for Christ.

Are there not found some in every large community, are there not some around us, who affect a high moral tone among their neighbors by whom they are known, but who, on going to a strange city, give loose reins to their passions? They plunge into a vortex of licentiousness. They are leading a dual life. Regarded as models of virtue at home, they are libertines abroad. They are playing the part of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Oh! dearly beloved, if it is a sin to lead the life of a voluptuary, is it not an abomination to add to lasciviousness the crime of hypocrisy?

Look, to-day, on the face of your Christ, and let the conduct of our Lord inspire you to be a consistent Christian. Be ever faithful to conscience, to principle, and to duty. Above all, be ever loyal to your religious convictions, through honor and dishonor, through good report and evil report, in vacation as well as in time of study, under God's eye as well as before your preceptors. This is the Christian manhood which distinguishes the hero from the coward, the martyr from the apostate, the follower of Christ from the obsequious slave of human respect.

Be men. Cast off the fetters of bondage. Assert your Christian birthright to freedom. "You were bought with a great price," be not the slaves of men. "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of mortal man, or the son of man who shall wither as grass?" Say with the Apostle: "As for me, it is a small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day." Fear Christ alone, and wait with composure the day of final reckoning.

He laughs best who laughs last. "Whoever shall be ashamed of Me or of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall appear in His glory." "Everyone that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven."

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

SPIRITUAL READING.

MATT. IV., 1-12. "It is written, not on bread alone doth man live, but on every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

GOD speaks to us by the voice of His ministers, and from the pages of the Sacred Volume. I shall address you to-day on the written word, and on the salutary fruit we may derive from the devout perusal of the Sacred Scripture. A good spiritual book, especially the Holy Scripture, is your *most powerful armor* in time of war, that is in moments of temptation. Our whole life is a series of temptations. "The life of man upon earth," says Job, "is a warfare." You have enemies without and within the camp. "The Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The world is constantly setting its snares to entrap you. Your own passions are so many domestic foes struggling against your better nature.

To fight successfully against this triple enemy, you have need of strong religious discipline. Now what a manual on military tactics is to the soldier, a religious book is to the soldier of Christ. The Sacred Volume will instruct you by word and example when you are to fight, and when you are prudently to decline battle by avoiding the occasions of sin.

"Put ye on the armor of God," says St. Paul, "that ye may be able to stand against the snares of the Devil; for our wrestling is not against flesh

and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rules of this world of darkness, against the spirit of wickedness in the high places. Wherefore, take unto you the armor of God, that ye may be able to resist in the evil day, and stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having on the breastplate of justice, . . . in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye may be able to extinguish the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."[1] Be clothed, says the Apostle, with the panoply of a Christian. Let faith in Christ be your shield; let hope in Him be your helmet; let justice be your breastplate, and let the word of God springing from your heart and your lips be the two-edged spiritual sword with which you will overcome the enemies of your salvation.

The timely remembrance of an appropriate sentence of Holy Writ is a tower of strength in the hour of temptation or despondency. But we can not conjure up these pious phrases unless we are familiar with the Sacred Text, and it is only by habitual perusal of the Word of God that we can familiarize ourselves with it.

When the demon of swelling pride and vain glory assails you, let your battle-cry be the words of the Royal Prophet; "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory." When the spirit of avarice haunts you, let your antidote be the saying of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" When the demon of unhallowed desires endeavors to defile your soul, devoutly recall the words of Christ: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God;" or the words of the Pa-

[1] Ephes. vi.

triarch Joseph: "How can I sin in the presence of my God!" When tempted with impatience on account of the loss of goods, health or relatives, say with Job: "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."[1]

It was thus our Savior acted when tempted by the Devil, to teach us how to conduct ourselves in similar circumstances. When the Demon tempted Him to gluttony, our Lord answered by quoting an appropriate text of Holy Scripture: "It is written, not on bread alone doth man live, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." When the Devil tried to persuade Him to perform an unnecessary miracle, by precipitating Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, and thus to tempt the Providence of God, Christ answered in the words of Holy Writ: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." And when prompted to vainglory, He again replied: "Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve."

The Holy Scripture is not only your weapon in time of war, but also your *companion* in time of peace. Few things are more enjoyable than the companionship and conversation of a devoted friend. And yet, have you not learned from experience that these conversations sometimes leave a sting behind them? You have inadvertently said something to wound your friend. You have used a bantering word which has cut him to the quick. Or he has made some remark that has irritated and annoyed you. You part from your friend with a clouded brow and a troubled conscience. Hence, a great Pagan Philosopher, Seneca, has said in one of his epistles, that he "never left the company of men without feeling less a

[1] Job. 1.

man." On the contrary, you never quit the company of God without feeling more a man. After listening to His "still small voice" without noise of words, in the Holy Scripture, you feel more humble, more chastened and subdued, more patient and charitable, more devout and religious. Conference with God in the Sacred Volume diffuses around you a heavenly and delicious fragrance. With the Holy Scripture as your companion, it will lead you into the most sacred and memorable scenes ever presented to the gaze of men. It will take you in spirit to Mount Sinai, where you can contemplate Jehovah giving His law to Moses. It will enable you to follow the children of Israel in their devious wanderings through the desert until the Promised Land is reached. It will accompany you to the mountains of Judea, where you can listen to the Prophets denouncing the iniquities of the Hebrew people. With the multitude, you can sit on the grass, and hear our Lord preaching His Sermon on the Mount. You can reverently stand beside Him while He is conversing with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. You can listen to Him while He is preaching His last discourse to His disciples. This companion will transport you to Athens, where you can hearken to Paul condemning the idolatry of that refined but superstitious people. You can behold in imagination those sacred personages recorded in Scripture, and listen to the very words that fell from their lips.

The Holy Scripture is a *mirror* in which we see vividly reflected the exalted virtues of some, and the moral deformities of others. The admirable conduct of the Saints stimulates us to imitate their virtues, while the crimes of those who have fallen, serve as beacon lights, warning us to shun the

rocks on which they have been wrecked. When we read of the heroic patience of a Job, after being suddenly deprived of health, children and property, we are moved to a spirit of resignation in our privations. When we read of the Patriarch Joseph, and of Susanna, consenting to the sacrifice of liberty, reputation, and of life itself, rather than defile their souls, we cherish more than ever the excellence of a chaste life. When we read the Epistles of St. Paul, and contemplate all his trials, dangers and persecutions, as they pass in panoramic view before us, when we see him braving the most violent storms without, and temptations within, and then, when we see ourselves so timid and so vacillating, and sheltering ourselves from the feeblest wind of adversity, ashamed of our degenerate nature, we resolve to shake off our lethargy, and to become more like the great model before us. On the other hand, when we read of men who were once distinguished for their sanctity, once elevated on the pinnacle of perfection, falling at last into the depths of sin,—when we read of a Samson, a David, a Solomon, those towering oaks of the forest, who had resisted many a violent storm, afterwards overthrown by a single blast of temptation, we are warned by their example to be always vigilant and prudent, and never to confide in our past virtue, for we are not stronger than Samson, nor holier than David, nor wiser than Solomon.

The Word of God is the most fearless *Preacher* you can listen to. Your most intimate friend will hesitate to remind you of your faults, from a sense of delicacy and from fear of being considered over censorious. Even the ministers of God, though they are commanded by the Holy Ghost to preach the word, to reprove, entreat and re-

buke with authority, are cautious not to lay bare the diseases of the soul in their naked deformity, from a dread of suggesting evil thoughts to the innocent, or of giving personal offense to the guilty, or of shocking the sensibilities of their hearers generally.

But the inspired Volume is never ashamed to tell us the plain, unvarnished truth, for people can never suspect its authors of being personal.

Moreover, you cannot usually hear the living voice of a preacher more than once or twice a week. His words pass away, but the Written Word remains. You have always the Sacred Book at your call. You can ponder again over a page which has impressed you, and you can imprint it on your heart and memory.

The Holy Scripture is the *food* of the soul. You partake of corporal nourishment twice or thrice a day, so that your life and health may be nourished and repaired. Now the Word of God is the life of the soul: "Not on bread alone doth man live, but on every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." "The words which I have spoken to you," says our Lord, "are spirit and life." Shall we feed the body and suffer the soul to starve? Shall we say to the slave, which is the body, Be thou pampered, and to the soul, which is the master, Do thou languish? No, no. Let us rather nourish our souls with the bread and meat of heavenly doctrine, which we will find in holy books, and which will enable us to advance on the road to perfection, even to the city of God.

It was the reading of a passage in one of St. Paul's Epistles that gave an Augustin to the Church. Seduced in his youth from the religion of his pious mother Monica into the Manichean heresy, Augustin became not only shipwrecked in

faith, but also dissolute in morals. One day while in company with his friends, Alipius and Pontitianus, the latter relates the extraordinary life and sanctity of St. Anthony. Augustin listens with marked attention to the narrative of his friend, and then replies with emotion: "These ignorant men take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, and we, with all our learning, remain wallowing in the mire of sin." Retiring afterward into the garden, he sits under a fig tree, and gives vent to tears. He is struggling between virtue and vice. God gently calls him upward to Himself, but his passions strive to chain him to the earth. While virtue and vice are struggling for the supremacy, Augustin hears the voice of a child uttering these words: "Tolle, lege, tolle, lege;" *"Take up and read, take up and read."* He instantly rises, and knowing that these were not the usual expressions of a child, he recognizes in that utterance a voice from Heaven. Entering the house he finds the Epistles of St. Paul open, and his eyes fall on these words, so well adapted to his condition: "Not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." He reads no more. From that moment dates his conversion to God.

I shall conclude by making a few practical suggestions: First—Rigidly exclude from your household all books and pamphlets which are hostile to religion and good morals. Never admit into your homes any newspaper or periodical which ventilates obscene news or licentious scandals. There are publishers throughout the country who, from a greed of gain, will prostitute the columns of their papers by admitting advertisements which are a

snare and a stumbling block to the innocent and unwary. Many youths of both sexes have learned the first lesson in the dark mysteries of moral depravity from the pages of a sensational and salacious paper. I have known the proprietor of an upright journal of this state, who refused an offer of ten thousand dollars for publishing in its columns an advertisement suggestive of immodesty, though its indecency was thinly veiled by ambiguous phraseology. Would to God that all newspaper owners had emulated this noble example.

You would not permit a phial of poison to remain on your mantel-piece, lest it might inadvertently fall into the hands of some members of your household. And will you allow to lie on your table an unclean journal which would instill the poison of sin into the soul?

You are careful to avoid any dish which you know from experience would nauseate your stomach, no matter how tempting and palatable it may be to the taste. Why then should you not discard those highly-seasoned novels which may be agreeable to a morbid appetite, but which defile the imagination and enfeeble the soul?

The Lacedemonians commanded the poems of Archilochus to be banished from their city, because, while his writings were elegant and attractive in point of style, they were immoral in their character, and tended to corrupt the minds of youth. What an example do these ancient Pagans set to degenerate modern Christians who greedily devour a literature that undermines faith and morals, and that has not even the merit of an agreeable and elevated style!

It is related in the Acts of the Apostles that many of those whom St. Paul had converted at Ephesus possessed dangerous books treating of

magic and other superstitions. These works they voluntarily collected together and burned, and their value was estimated at 50,000 pieces of silver. My brethren, these books were not as hurtful as those which attack your faith. And if those early Christians destroyed their superstitious writings, regardless of their price, how can we retain in our possession books that utter the most blasphemous calumnies against the Christian religion?

Second—The same motive you have to eliminate dangerous publications should prompt you to exercise your zeal in the diffusion of sound literature, particularly such as is explanatory of Christian Doctrine. Circulate good books among your neighbors, and you will be co-operating with the clergy in the propagation of the religion of Christ. You will share in the reward promised in these words: "They that instruct others unto justice, will shine like stars for all eternity."

It is difficult to overestimate the blessed result which follows the judicious dissemination of literature treating of Catholic doctrine. Many a fervent Christian is indebted for the first seeds of faith to the perusal of a Catholic pamphlet or periodical which chance threw in his way. To illustrate this fact I will relate an incident that occurred when I was Bishop of North Carolina. I received from a certain prominent physician of that state a letter in which the writer desired to be informed regarding the leading tenets of the Catholic Church. At the close of a correspondence between us I sent him some books explanatory of the religion of Christ. In the course of some weeks he informed me that his mind was convinced, and that he would visit me within a few days, with his wife and children, in order to be baptized, if he were deemed worthy of that

grace. After receiving the whole family into the Church, I asked the Doctor what had first prompted him to direct his steps towards the fold of Christ. He replied: "No Catholic was ever known to reside in my native county; I never entered a Catholic Church before I came to this city to-day, and I never spoke to a priest until I met you. The first glimpse of light that ever dawned on me came from the perusal of a sermon by a distinguished Prelate which casually fell in my way." Three hundred souls were soon afterwards added to the faith in the locality in which the physician resided from the influence of his zeal and example.

Third—Resolve during this holy season of Lent to set aside a certain time each day or night which you will devote to the reading of a religious book. Select for spiritual reading such venerable treatises of piety as have, by their exceptional merit, survived the wreck of time, and have met the commendation of succeeding generations. But, above all other books, choose the Sacred Scripture. There is a special grace attached to the reading of the inspired volume. It will impart to your soul a solid, sturdy and healthy piety. It is the inexhaustible fountain from which the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, Christian orators and poets, have drawn their inspiration.

During our ecclesiastical studies in the Seminary it was our rule to carry about us a copy of the New Testament. We were obliged to read from it every day, not sitting or standing, but on bended knee. And from the time of his ordination every priest is obliged to spend more than an hour each day in reciting the breviary, which consists largely of selections from the Sacred Scripture. Now what is good for the priest ought

to be profitable to the people. Pope Pius VI., the highest authority in the Church, in an official letter, urgently recommends to the faithful the pious perusal of the Word of God. By meditating on the Holy Scripture you will nourish your soul with the bread of life. Read the Sacred Text with attention and reverence. Read it, not so much with the desire of information, as of edification. Read it with the same spiritual joy and hunger with which the exiled children of Israel listened in Babylon to the law when it was read to them by the Prophet Baruch. While the citizens of Jerusalem were in captivity in Babylon, Baruch was sent to them from Jerusalem to read to them the law of God: "And when they heard the law they wept, and fasted, and prayed before the Lord."[1] "Upon the ruins of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Sion."

You, my beloved, are in a situation like that of the Jews. Like them you are far away from your true home, the heavenly Jerusalem. Like them you are exiled in the Babylon of this world. And God sends you, as He sent them, a message contained in His Holy Books to cheer your hearts and bring you glad tidings of redemption. Is not the Sacred Scripture a message from Heaven? Open your hearts, then, as the ancient Hebrews did, and listen to the word of God with sorrow for sin, with a spirit of holy compunction and an increased desire of possessing the heavenly Jerusalem. And may God, who nourishes the earth with His early and latter rain, enrich your souls with the dews of heavenly grace, that you "may hear the Word in patience, and bring forth fruit a hundred fold."

[1] I. Bar.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

SUPERIORITY OF THE GOSPEL OVER THE OLD LAW.

MATT. XVII. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him."

MOSES disappears, and Elias disappears, and the bright clouds are dispersed on Mount Thabor, and Jesus alone remains. What a mystery is this! It foreshadows the passing away of the Old Law, and the advent of the new Teacher of the world. Yes, let Moses depart, let Elias depart. Let them vanish into space. But do Thou, O Lord, remain. "Let not God speak to us, lest we die," said the Jews of old. But we will say: Do Thou speak to us, O eternal Truth, and we shall live. Thou alone art all-sufficient for us. The wisdom of the Patriarchs, the foreknowledge of the Prophets, the illumination of the Evangelists, the sanctity of the Apostles, are all centered in Thee. They all spoke of Thee, and by Thee, and through Thee. During the long night preceding Thy coming, the Patriarchs and Prophets shone like stars in the moral firmament. But their mission was over and they disappeared when Thou didst rise above the horizon. Thou art the light of the world. He that followeth Thee walketh not in darkness but shall have the light of life.

Whenever Jehovah wished to communicate with His people in the Old Dispensation He sent His prophets to act as His envoys. But He honors His children of the New Dispensation by selecting

His only begotten Son as His Ambassador and Plenipotentiary. "God," says St. Paul, "who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke to the fathers by the prophets; last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who, being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sin, sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they." [1]

Let us consider the superiority of Christ, our Teacher, over the Hebrew Lawgiver.

This pre-eminence is thus set forth by the Apostle: "If the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which is made void; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory." [2]

Moses, as well as the prophets who followed him, addressed himself exclusively to the children of Israel. They had no mission to the Gentile people, and had, therefore, no concern for them.

Jesus Christ, our Lawgiver, is the only founder of religion who had the courage to make the whole world the theatre of His Gospel message.

Eight hundred years before the coming of Christ, the great Prophet Isaiah saw, with prophetic vision, the new Jerusalem, the Church of God, in which children of all nations of the earth were congregated, and which was illumined by the

[1] Heb. i. [2] II. Cor. iii.

Sun of Justice: "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see. All these are gathered together. They are come to thee. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart shall be enlarged when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee."

And the eternal Father, through the mouth of the Royal Prophet, thus addresses His Son: "Ask of Me and I will give the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Thy possession." And well did Christ fulfill those predictions made concerning Him. In commissioning His Apostles, He says to them: "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, teach *all nations,* teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[1]

These words of Christ, in which He declared that His mission was to be world-wide, and was to embrace all Gentile nations, may not strike us to-day as particularly marvellous, since we are now everywhere confronted by evidences of Christian civilization, and all the nations of the earth are connected together by the most intimate social and commercial ties.

But the grandeur and sublimity of our Savior's words will be at once manifest when we recall to mind that they were spoken in an obscure corner of the globe, when the world was seated in idolatry, and when the communications of the nations

[1] Matt. xxviii.

of the earth with one another were few and far between.

Our Savior again refers to the universal scope of His Gospel mission: "You shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even *to the uttermost bounds of the earth.*" [1] It must have been a great surprise and a wonderful revelation to the Apostles, to be commissioned to preach, not only in Judea, but also in Samaria, for the Samaritans were regarded as a schismatical and heretical people, with whom the Jews were forbidden to have any social or religious relations whatsoever. And still greater was their astonishment to be sent even to the Gentiles, who were considered to be outside the pale of divine mercy.

Once more Jesus says to His Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel *to every creature.*" Be not restrained by state lines or national boundaries. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." All mankind are the children of My Father. They are all My brethren. I have died for them all. I have broken down the wall of partition that separates nation from nation, tribe from tribe. They shall all be one, sharing in the inexhaustible blessings of a common Father.

Preach, therefore, to Jew and Gentile, to Greek and barbarian, to bond and free, to young and old, to rich and poor, to learned and unlearned. The food of My Gospel, like the manna of old, shall adapt itself to all intellectual tastes. It shall be milk to babes and meat to the strong. My religion shall permeate every grade of society, everywhere purifying and renovating the social mass.

[1] Acts i.

There is another feature that exalts the Gospel above the Mosaic dispensation. The covenant of Moses was a law of fear and bondage. The Gospel of Christ is a law of love and liberty. The Jews lived under the law of fear; they were ruled by fear; they were restrained from sin more by the rod of chastisement than by the hope of reward. The Prophets of Israel are continually denouncing the vengeance of God on the Hebrew people. There is rarely a glimpse of sunshine amid the thunder and storms and whirlwinds of Jehovah's anathemas.

The Hebrew people call God their Lord, their Master, their King, their Ruler, their Judge. But they seldom approach so near to Him as to call Him by the endearing name of Father.

Not so you, says St. Paul, speaking to the Christians of his time. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the Spirit of the adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, Father. For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, heirs also, heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ."

The knowledge of the spiritual world which Jesus Christ has imparted to mankind exceeds that of Moses as much as the light of the noonday sun exceeds that of the early dawn. The Hebrew Lawgiver imparted to the children of Israel little or no insight into the life to come. He threw no light on their destiny beyond the grave. Our Divine Savior has penetrated the mists of time, and has revealed to us the glorious realms of eternity. He gives us a sublime idea of God. He speaks to us of a God essentially one, of a God existing from eternity to eternity. He speaks of a God who created all things by His power, who

governs all things by His wisdom, whose superintending Providence watches over the affairs of nations as well as of men. To my mind, there is not any doctrine of Christ so comforting to the human heart as the doctrine of an overruling Providence, and of His abiding presence with us. And this is a favorite subject of our Savior's discourses. He speaks of a God infinitely just, infinitely merciful, infinitely good and provident.

The Christian dispensation excels the Jewish law, not only by the breadth and clearness of its revelation, but also by the sublime standard of its moral teaching. The law of Moses governed the exterior conduct of man; the law of Christ controls the interior movements of his heart. The Mosaic code prohibits the crime of murder; the Gospel forbids revengeful thoughts; the former condemns the sin of adultery; the latter proscribes lascivious desires.

While holding up to us lofty ideals of moral conduct, our Lord gives comfort to the human heart. He brings us that consolation which springs from the conscious possession of the truth. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Blessed is that freedom which rescues us from the bondage of error. He not only instructs us as our Teacher, but He prescribes to us as our Physician, and heals us as our God.

And what reward did the Hebrew Legislator hold out to the faithful Israelites? He assured them of the possession of the Promised Land, which he himself was destined never to enter, for he died on its frontier. He promised a long life on the earth, with an abundance of the good things of this world—oil, and honey, and wine, and flocks, and herds. The ideal happiness of a son of Israel,

was to recline in peace and security under his own vine and fig tree.

Jesus Christ, our Lawgiver, promises to those who keep His commandments admission to the true Land of Promise, which is the Kingdom of Heaven. And as a faithful leader, He precedes His followers, to prepare the way for them. "In My Father's house," He says, "there are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be."

He gives His disciples no security of temporal possessions, for He regards earthly treasures too inadequate and insignificant a recompense for His devoted followers. But He holds out to us celestial glory as our reward. The kingdom of Heaven is the constant theme of our Savior's discourses. That phrase—the "Kingdom of Heaven"—occurs in the Gospels one hundred and five times, as if to admonish us that the Kingdom of God should be habitually before our mind. Alas! how many a Caesar and Richard have staked their peace of mind, their lives and souls, to attain an earthly kingdom! We have only to live righteously to secure a heavenly one.

We condemn the folly of Macbeth in risking his life to possess an earthly crown. Is not our madness more deplorable in neglecting the means at hand to obtain an everlasting crown?

Our Divine Teacher gives us no pledge of a long earthly life. For would not a career protracted as long as that of Mathusala be a mockery and disappointment from the consciousness that it would one day come to an end? No life short of that which is eternal can satisfy the aspirations of the human heart. Christ does not leave us in doubt as to the duration of our happiness in His

blessed kingdom. "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he be dead, shall live, and every one that liveth (the life of grace), and believeth in Me, *shall not die forever.*" [1]

St. Paul follows the teachings of his Master: "We have not here a lasting dwelling, but we seek one to come." [2] "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (of the body), be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, *everlasting* in Heaven." [3] "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly *an eternal weight of glory.*" [4]

The same eternity of life is proclaimed by St. John: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and *death shall be no more,* nor mourning, nor wailing, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."

And as to the nature and extent of that felicity, we are told that it is beyond the power of man to have an adequate conception of it in the present stage of his existence. St. Paul, after being lifted up to the third heaven, and caught up into Paradise, has only this to say: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, (to conceive) what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

When Peter beheld his Master transfigured before him on Mount Thabor, His face shining as the sun, and His garments white as snow, enveloped in a cloud of glory, the voice of the eternal Father commending His Son to the world, well could he exclaim in an ecstacy of delight: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." That glorious vision is ever before his mind. He speaks of it in one of his

[1] John xi. [2] Heb. xiii. [3] II. Cor. v. [4] *Ibid.* iv.

Epistles. It gives him at once a glimpse and a foretaste of heavenly joys. It cheers and sustains him amid the trials and persecutions he endured in after years.

And when you entered to-day this holy mount—this temple of God—could you not exclaim with Peter: "Lord, it is good for us to be here?" For in coming to the church, you are come not to Mount Thabor, "but you are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament." [1]

The eternal Father who spoke on Mount Thabor delivers the same message to you from this sacred pulpit. He says also to you: "This is My beloved Son. Hear ye Him." For the words spoken here are not the utterances of a prophet, but of God Himself. Let the instructions you hear sink deep into your hearts. Let them resound in your ears. Let them be sweet music to your souls. Let them be your light and guide in the walks of life. Listen to them with a spirit of compunction. Listen to them with gratitude for the repentance you may feel; for the most precious gift of God to sinful man is the gift of compunction for sin. Listen to them with the joy of sons aspiring to the kingdom of their heavenly Father, and with an earnest desire for heavenly glory.

[1] Heb. xii.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

WHY THE CHURCH HONORS THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

LUKE XI., 27-28. "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck."

IT is in accordance with the economy of divine Providence, that, whenever the Almighty selects any person for some important mission, He always bestows on that person the graces and qualifications which are necessary for its faithful fulfillment.

Thus, when Moses was chosen by God to be the leader of the Hebrew people, he hesitated to assume the duties assigned to him, on the plea of slowness and impediment of speech. But the Lord reassured him by saying to him: "Fear not, I will be in thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt speak."

John the Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb, because he was selected to be the precursor of our Savior, and to prepare the way for His coming.

The Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were endowed with the gift of miracles and of tongues, because they were chosen to be the heralds of the Gospel and the columns of the Christian Church.

Now, of all those who participated in the work of the redemption, there is surely no one who filled a mission so exalted and so sacred as that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and, therefore, there is no one who needed so high a degree of sanctity as she.

For, if the Prophets and Apostles were sanctified, because they were the bearers of the Word of Life, how much more holy ought Mary to be, who bore the Author of life Himself! If St. John was blessed because he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord, how much more hallowed should she be who ushered Him into the world! If God said to His priests of old: "Be ye clean, ye who carry the vessels of the Lord;" if the churches, and the material vessels themselves used in the Divine service are set apart by special consecration, how could the soul of Mary, who was God's vessel of election to bring forth the world's Redeemer, ever be profaned by sin? Hence it was by a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the woman in the Gospel of to-day exclaimed: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked."

The question is often asked: Why does the Catholic Church pay so much honor to the Blessed Virgin? The answer is contained in the Gospel narrative. Let us carefully weigh each word of the dialogue between the Angel and the Virgin, and like the bee that flits from flower to flower, let us extract the honey of truth and devotion from every blossom of the bed of spiritual roses that is set before us.

"The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin, and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold,

thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and, therefore, the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." [1]

No greater honor was ever conferred upon a human creature than was, on this occasion, bestowed on Mary, whether we consider the personal dignity of the envoy, or the momentous character of the message, or the language of respect in which it is conveyed.

"Hail, full of grace." The angel does not commend Mary for her personal charms, though she is the fairest lily of Israel, for he knows that "beauty is vain and favor is deceitful, but the woman who feareth the Lord shall be praised." He does not praise her on account of her distinguished birth, though she is descended from Israel's kings. No, but he admires her because she is the elected child of benediction, and because of the hidden beauty of her soul. He sees in her "our tainted nature's solitary boast," who had never been sullied by the sin of Adam's disobedience. And as the diamond reflects every color of the rainbow according as it is exposed to the sun's rays, so did the soul of Mary, from the moment that the Sun of Justice shone upon her, reflect every virtue as occasion called it forth.

St. Stephen and the Apostles were also said to be filled with the Spirit of God. But we are not to infer from this circumstance that the same measure of grace that was bestowed upon Mary was imparted to them. On each one is conferred

[1] Luke i.

grace according to his merits and needs. For, "one is the glory of the sun, another is the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars, for star differeth from star in glory." And as Mary's office as Mother of God immeasureably surpassed in dignity the mission of the protomartyr and of the Apostles, so did her grace superabound over theirs.

"The Lord is with thee." This is a popular phrase in Holy Scripture, and is applied to those who are under the particular protection of Almighty God. The Lord is with His creatures in many ways. He is present with the whole human family by His knowledge, from which nothing can be concealed. He is with them by His power, which is irresistible. He is with them by His essence, which is all-pervading; "for, in Him we live and move, and have our being." God is with His saints in a more intimate manner. He dwells in them by His mercy, grace, friendship, and love. It is of those chosen vessels that our Lord speaks when He says: "If any one love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make our abode with him."[1] But He is present with Mary in a still more special manner, for not only her will, but her very flesh, was united to Him.

"Blessed art thou among women." This expression has a superlative meaning among the Hebrew people, and implies that she is blessed above all women. Similar words of praise were bestowed on Judith in the Old Law, when she cut off the head of Holofernes; and she is regarded as a type of Mary, who was chosen by God to crush the infernal serpent. And if Judith deserved to be called blessed among women in rescuing the

[1] John xiv., 23.

children of Israel from temporal calamities, how much more does Mary, who co-operated so actively in the redemption of the human race, deserve that title!

Some time afterwards Mary visits her cousin St. Elizabeth in the mountains of Judea. There is joy in Mary's soul. She wishes to share her bliss with her cousin. The Sun of Justice is shining in her heart; she desires to diffuse His rays through the household of Elizabeth. Her soul is laden with spiritual treasures. She longs to communicate these treasures to her kinswoman. And when Elizabeth greets Mary, she exclaims with a loud voice: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me. And behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy." The usual order of salutation is reversed, and the venerable matron expresses her astonishment that her young kinswoman should deign to visit her.

It was on this occasion that the Blessed Virgin uttered that sublime canticle of praise called the Magnificat. "My soul," she exclaims, "doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior, because He hath regard to the humility of His handmaid; for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name; and His mercy is from generation unto generation to them that fear Him."[1]

In my judgment, there is no prophecy in the Old or the New Testament so striking and luminous as the prophecy uttered on this occasion by the Blessed Virgin Mary, when she declared that

[1] Luke 1,

henceforth all generations should call her blessed. Here is a young maiden, unknown to the world, living in an obscure village in a remote corner of the earth, making the bold and startling declaration that all future ages should declare her blessedness. The evidence of this prophecy can not be questioned, because it is recorded in the Gospel, and its authenticity has never been denied. Its fulfillment can not be doubted, for in every age and country the Magnificat has been chanted, and the blessedness of Mary has been proclaimed. I may add that it is only in the Catholic Church that this prophecy is adequately fulfilled, for while those outside the Church speak of Mary as the Virgin, or the Mother of Jesus, we invariably address her by the title of blessed.

With these evidences before us, can it be surprising that we pay honor to the Blessed Virgin? Rather the wonder and the shame would be if we did not honor her. "Honor is he worthy of whom the King hath a mind to honor." The King of Kings hath honored Mary. The eternal Father hath honored her by adopting her as His child of predilection. God the Son hath honored her by selecting her above all other women to be His Mother. "He was subject to her." He obeyed, and served, and cherished her with all the affection that a dutiful son has for a mother. The Holy Ghost hath honored her by making her soul and body His living temple.

And let it be always borne in mind that the homage we pay to the Mother redounds to the Son. The halo that encircles her brow, is but an emanation of the effulgence that radiates from Him. And, therefore, there is not a grain of incense burned in her honor that does not ascend to the throne of God. For, whatever grace, or

virtue, or power, or influence she possesses, is all referred to Him. Just as the moon derives all her light from the sun, so does Mary derive all her gifts of nature and grace from Jesus Christ, the eternal Sun of Justice.

But while our Blessed Lady is to be honored, is not the homage paid to her carried beyond due bounds? Why do you so often blend together the worship of God and the veneration of the Blessed Virgin? Why do you so often repeat in succession the Lord's prayer and the angelical salutation? Is not this practice calculated to level all distinction between the Creator and His creature, and to offend God who is so jealous of His glory?

It is not at all unusual in the Holy Scriptures to find the praises of God united with those of His saints. In the canticle of Judith, the praises of the Lord and of that holy woman are combined. The sacred writer, after glorifying the Almighty, extols the virtues of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other patriarchs and prophets of Israel. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, exclaims: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is Jesus who will be born of thee." Will a father be jealous of the honor paid to his child, who reflects his own image and likeness, and exhibits those virtues of which he was the pattern? And is not Mary the child of God, reflecting His grace and righteousness?

Why should God be jealous of the honor paid to Mary! Would Michael Angelo, if he were on earth, be jealous of our admiration for St. Peter's Basilica which his genius had planned? And is not the living temple of Mary's soul the work of the divine Architect? Must not she say: "Thy hands, O Lord, have made and formed me." Is it not He who adorned that temple with those

treasures we so much admire? Has she not so declared when she cried out: "He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name."

God jealous of the honor paid to Mary! As well might we imagine that the sun, if endowed with intelligence, would be jealous of the mellow, golden cloud that envelops Him, that reflects His brightness, and brings out in bolder light His own inaccessible splendor. As well might we suppose that the same luminary would be jealous of our admiration for the beautiful rose whose opening petals, rich color and delicious fragrance are all the fruit of His beneficent rays.

I find Thee, O Jesus, nestled in the arms of Thy Mother in the manger at Bethlehem; I find you both together in your exile in Egypt, together in Nazareth, together in the temple; I find her standing beside Thee at the cross on Mount Calvary. I find your names inscribed side by side in the Apostles' Creed. It is fitting that both names should find a warm place in my heart, and that both names should often flow successively from my lips. Inseparable in life and in death, they should not be divorced in my prayer, for "what God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

CHRIST'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SOUL.

JOHN VI., 7-15.

WHEN Josue, the greatest leader of the children of God, was upwards of one hundred years old, and shortly before his death, he summoned the people of Israel before him, and recounted to them in touching language all that Jehovah had done for them, how he had wrought wondrous miracles in behalf of themselves and their fathers, delivering them from Egyptian bondage, drying up the waters of the Red Sea to enable them to cross it, feeding them with manna in the desert, conquering the various tribes that opposed their march, and placing them in peaceable possession of their promised inheritance. "Now, therefore," he continues, "choose ye this day that which pleaseth you, whom you would rather serve, whether the gods that your fathers served in Mesopotamia, or the gods of the Amorrhites. But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." And the people answered and said: We will serve the Lord.[1] And Josue erected on the spot a monument as a lasting memorial of the covenant they made to serve and worship the King of kings.

Now St. Paul expressly declares that "all these things happened to them in figure" of the Christian dispensation. The passage of the Jews through the Red Sea is a type of our Baptism. The cloud sheltering them from the sun's oppres-

[1] Jos. xxiv.

sive rays, is emblematic of the refreshment and consolation of the Holy Spirit. The manna that fell in the desert is a striking figure of the Eucharist. The rod of Moses and the brazen serpent typify the cross. The Promised Land prefigures the kingdom of Heaven. Pharaoh with his pursuing army symbolizes Satan and the fallen angels. Josue is a most striking figure of Jesus, whose very name he bears, for both names are identical in sound and in meaning in the original tongue. Josue in being chosen as the instrument of God in subduing the Promised Land and distributing it to the children of Israel, foreshadows Christ, our heavenly and blood-stained King and Leader, who has opened the true Land of Promise as a heritage to His devoted followers.

If I were to question you to-day, my brethren, as Josue asked the Hebrew people, will you serve and love Christ, your King and Redeemer? what would be your answer? Were your lips to give expression to your thoughts, you would all cry out with the children of Israel: We will love and serve Christ our King, and we will renounce those false gods, our passions, which would seduce us from our allegiance to our spiritual Chieftain.

Christ, then, our Lord is not only our great High Priest, but He is also our King, in the strict sense of the term.

When Pilate asked our Savior if He were a King, He replied: You speak the truth, I am a King. When He made His solemn entry into Jerusalem, before assuming the royal robe that was to be purpled with His blood, before wearing the crown, not of gold, but of thorns, and before He ascended the throne of His cross, the multitude cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord."

And when the Pharisees protested against such a title being conferred upon Him, He replied: "I say to you: If they should be silent, the stones will cry out."

But our Lord does not leave us in doubt as to the nature of His kingship. When He had wrought the miracle in the desert by multiplying loaves and fishes to feed the hungering multitude, as is recorded in to-day's Gospel, they sought to take Him by force and make Him their temporal King, but He fled into the mountain apart. Even His disciples had entertained the belief that He would establish a secular kingdom, but He soon disabused them of their false notion. He emphatically declared that His "kingdom was not of this world." I have come on earth, He says, not attended by the pomp of royal majesty. I have come not surrounded by legions of soldiers, nor served by courtiers. I have come, not dwelling in a princely palace, for I was born in a stable. I have come not clothed in royal robes. The vesture becoming my royalty are the white robes of innocence and the red robes of martyrdom, fit emblems of peace and love which I came to establish on earth. I have come not faring sumptuously like earthly monarchs, for "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." I am here not to establish My dominion in the imperial city of Rome; no, I will fix My throne in the spiritual city of Jerusalem,—the city of peace. I will plant My kingdom in your living hearts. There will I lovingly dwell, and reign over you in peace everlasting.

Christ, then, is your King by virtue of legitimate conquest. But how different is the line of action of our heavenly King in His conquest of

our soul, from the course pursued by earthly generals in subduing temporal kingdoms! Alexander the Great established an empire by wading through the blood of his fellow men. By the sword he conquered, and by the sword he kept his subjects in bondage.

Our divine Ruler obtained the victory over the kingdom of our hearts, not by the material sword, but by "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God," not by enslaving our bodies, but by rescuing our souls from the bondage of sin; not by shedding the blood of others, but by the shedding of His own blood: "Christ humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth."

Again, all earthly empires are circumscribed by national boundaries. Even the British Empire, though the largest in the world, has its limitations defined. But God put no bounds to the dominion of His Son: "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possessions." The empire of Christ embraces members of the human family in every portion of the habitable globe, of every nation, and people, and tongue. O! well may we exclaim with the blessed spirits in the Apocalypse: "Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, to God in Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us to our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Yes, we shall reign on the earth as viceroys of the heavenly King, by exercising dominion over the world, the flesh and the Devil; for, is not he a greater king

who ruleth his passions, than he who taketh cities?

The empire of Christ over the soul is not only boundless in extent, but eternal in duration. It is the common fate of all earthly kingdoms to rise, to flourish and decay.

Where are now the once proud Babylonian and Assyrian Empires? Where is the Persian Empire? They have long since perished. Where is the great Roman Empire, once mistress of the world? Nothing of it remains but a few fading monuments to commemorate its ancient grandeur. Where is Carthage that once inspired Rome with terror? It has passed away. And where are the kings that once swayed these mighty nations? Where are Cyrus and Darius and Croesus and Alexander, Hannibal and Caesar? There is none now so low as to do them reverence. Nothing remains of them but the shadow of once mighty names.

And even in those kingdoms that still survive, one dynasty succeeds another, one king follows another. You sometimes hear these words: The king is dead; long live the king!

But Christ our King never dies. No monument shall ever record the destruction of His spiritual kingdom over the soul. He says to each of us: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." "He shall rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. A sceptre of justice is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." Thy dominion over us shall outlive this material world and all it contains. "They shall perish, but Thou remainest, and all of them shall grow old as a garment: and as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed! But Thou art always the selfsame, and Thy years shall not fail."

Christ our King is a jealous king. He will tolerate no rivals in His empire over our souls. His reign must be absolute and supreme. He demands of us undivided loyalty, to the sacrifice of every affection that is opposed to Him, even of life itself if necessary: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me."

But let us not imagine that the service of Christ is incompatible with parental or filial love. For He that said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart," has also said: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Again, understand me well. Do not imagine for a moment that fealty to Christ will make you less loyal to the nation. On the contrary, the more faithful you are to Christ, the more loyal you will be to your country. For He that said: Render to God the things that are God's, has also said: Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. He has put the seal of His authority on our devotion to our country, and her civil and political institutions. "By Me kings reign, and lawgivers decree just things." And the Apostle says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for, there is no power but from God, and they that are, are ordained by God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."

A certain English divine is reported to have recently remarked: I am first a British subject, and then a churchman. It was just the same as if an American had said: I am first an American citizen, and then a Christian. I do not think much

of the religion of a man who will relegate his Christianity to the background. I see no contradiction between loyalty to Christ and allegiance to our civil rulers. I see nothing in the Constitution that is opposed to the Gospel, and I see nothing in the Gospel that is at variance with the Constitution.

Therefore, I would rather say: I am at the same time a Christian and an American citizen. By the grace of Jesus Christ I am a Christian. By the Providence of God I am an American citizen. God has put this double yoke upon me, fealty to Christ and loyalty to country. They are one and inseparable. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Soldiers of Christ, what an honor it is to serve the Lord your God! For what king is like to the King of kings "who dwelleth on high, and looketh on the low things in Heaven and on earth?" The mightiest of earthly kings is the subject of the King of Heaven, while the lowliest subject of the King of Heaven is himself a king. He shares in the royalty of his Master. For to serve God is to reign.

And what earthly monarch can reward his subjects as bountifully as the King of Heaven? We know from the history of the world how uncertain and capricious are the smiles and favors of earthly rulers. No man ever served his sovereign with more unswerving devotion than Wolsey served Henry VIII.; but when he lost the king's favor through the intrigues of courtiers, well could he exclaim in the bitterness of his heart: "Had I served my God with half the zeal I have served my king, He would not in mine age have left me naked to mine enemies."

How many a brave soldier has gone down to his untimely grave "unwept, unhonored and un-

sung," because there was left no record of his valorous deeds! Not so with you, soldiers of the cross. No service of yours, no matter how small and secret, shall escape the all-seeing eye of your Captain. Every faithful follower can say with all the confidence of the Apostle: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, and now there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just God, will give unto me."

How are we to pay allegiance to Christ our King? By consecrating to Him the two noblest faculties of our souls, our intellect and our will. We submit our intellect to Him by an abiding faith in Him, and our will, by observing His law and loving Him.

And why should we not have faith in God and in Christ? Do we seek a proof of God's existence? The great temple of nature around us proclaims His being and His creative power. His name is stamped on every star in the heavens, on every leaf of the forest, and on every grain of sand on the sea-shore. They all silently, yet eloquently, cry out with the Psalmist: "Thou, O Lord, hast made us, and not we ourselves." How truly did the same royal Prophet exclaim: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament announces the work of His hands." And the Apostle says: "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power also, and divinity. So that they are inexcusable who recognize not the invisible Creator from the visible creation."

And why should we not have faith in His Son, Jesus Christ? Does not His death, followed by His resurrection, afford ample ground for believ-

ing in His divinity? Was not His death witnessed by as many spectators as witnessed the death of Caesar at the base of Pompey's column? And if we doubt not Caesar's death by the dagger of Brutus, how can we question the death of Christ by His crucifixion? Was not His subsequent resurrection beheld by a crowd of witnesses? Was He not seen, as St. Paul tells us, by five hundred persons at one time? Did not the Apostles behold Him and converse with Him several times? Did they not seal their testimony with their blood? And what better evidence can we have of the truth of a declaration than that men should deliberately lay down their lives in attestation of what they have seen?

Let faith, then, in Christ have dominion over your soul. Exercise a triple faith — faith in your hearts—by believing in the truths He has revealed to us, saying with blessed Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go, (but to Thee) for Thou hast the words of eternal life?" faith on your lips, by being ever ready when the occasion demands to give an account of the hope that is in you: "With the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;" faith in your actions, by always making the Gospel the rule and standard of your life: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven."

Incline your will to the service of your heavenly King. If you survey the history of the world, you cannot point out in ancient or modern times, a single war between two nations, in which one of the contending parties was not actuated by injustice, selfishness and rapacity, by a lust for territory and power, no matter how adroitly these

unworthy motives were concealed under the guise of diplomatic language.

But when you march under the banner of your Savior King, you are sure to tread the path of justice and righteousness. Christ never constrains your conscience; He never gives a command that is not conformable to right reason, and that is not ratified in Heaven.

The perfection of sanctity consists in the love of God, "for love is the fulfilling of the law," and the perfection of the love of God is found in an absolute conformity of our will to the Divine will. Union of sentiment, union of heart and will,—this is the closest bond that can unite the creature with the Creator.

Our Lord does not say: My son, Give me thy possessions; for they belong to Him already: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein." He regards even as a secondary matter the service of your body, for it was formed by Him: "Thy hands, O Lord, have framed and fashioned me." But He says: "My son, give Me thy heart," and thy affections, for this is all you can call your own.

Consecrate to-day to your royal Master your intellect by a firm belief in Him. Consecrate your will by observing His law, and by conforming your will to the Divine will. Make oblation of your heart by loving Him. Consecrate your memory by recalling His manifold mercies to you. Dedicate to Him the whole kingdom of the soul with all its powers, so that you can say with the Apostle: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

In conclusion, I pray with St. Paul "that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, ye being rooted and founded in charity, that ye may be able to

comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and height and depth of the love of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge. Now to Him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we ask or understand, to Him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for all generations, world without end. Amen."

PASSION SUNDAY.

THE INTERIOR SORROWS OF CHRIST.

JOHN VIII., 46-59. "I honor My Father, and ye have dishonored Me."

IN the history of human sorrow, no man ever endured so much anguish of mind as our Savior, Jesus Christ. The Prophet Isaiah speaks of Him as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity." Jeremiah thus portrays the sufferings of Christ: "O all ye who pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." His whole life was one continuous round of affliction, culminating in His agony in the Garden, when He gave vent to His overwhelming grief by exclaiming: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."

Let us, at the outset, bear in mind that the soul of Jesus was most sensitive to injuries, because of His luminous sense of justice and His intense hatred of wrong.

A man of a brutal nature and coarse habits is so blunted in his feelings as not to suffer the sting of insult and degradation so keenly as a man of a delicate and refined mental fibre. Christ's fine and tender sensibilities caused Him to feel more acutely than ever a human being experienced, the ingratitude and dishonor, the humiliation and calumnies He endured.

The anguish that others undergo from impending evils is more or less assauged by the company of friends, by various diversions and amusements,

and by a thousand incidents that occupy the mind and distract the memory.

Moreover, a merciful Providence, conscious of our infirmities, usually gives us only a partial insight into the crosses that await us. He conceals from us the time of the dread visitations. He sends them to us singly, and not in battalions, lest a complete and simultaneous survey of them should overwhelm us and fill us with despair. "God," says the Apostle, "is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above your power, but will make even with the temptation an issue that you may be able to bear it."[1]

But Christ's mental agony had no such alleviations. He had no friends to comfort Him. "I have," He says, "trodden the wine press alone."[2] "My sorrow is continually before Me."[3] Every act of opprobrium and perfidy He was to endure always confronted Him, and His mind and memory could never for a moment be diverted or beguiled by other considerations from contemplating His sorrows in all their accumulated bitterness.

The first cause of our Savior's distress of mind was His consciousness that His mission would be fruitless to a large portion of the human race. When He is led in triumph into the city of Jerusalem, amid the joyful acclamations of the people, He weeps over the city, because He foreknows that they would reject His teaching, and would repudiate Him as the promised Messiah. The prophecy that Christ then uttered regarding the impending destruction of the city may be applied to every living soul that has been unfaithful to the Divine warnings. Listen, O Christian soul, to His pathetic words, and take them to heart: "If thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that

[1] I. Cor. x., 13. [2] Isaiah lxiii., 3. [3] Ps. xxxvii.

are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and they shall not leave in thee a stone above a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

Yes, as sure as God reigns, as sure as Jerusalem was destroyed in accordance with our Savior's prediction, so surely will you incur the wrath of Heaven if your repentance comes too late. Death will cast its dark shadow around you. The powers of darkness will encompass you. Your sins will confront you. Those castles of ambition and pleasure that you have constructed will vanish into space. Not a stone of the airy edifice will be left above a stone. All your pet schemes will come to naught and will avail you nothing, if you take no heed of the day of God's visitation.

I have planted thee, says the Lord, as a fair tree in the garden of My Church. I have warmed thee with the rays of My Gospel message. I have watered thee with the dews and rains of heavenly grace, and yet I find no fruit in thee.

"Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood."[1] The first cause, then, of our Savior's interior sorrow is man's impenitence.

Another cause of pain to Him was the ingratitude of those who had been the recipients of His bounty. Like all sensitive natures, Jesus Christ

[1] Isaiah i., 2.

had a keen sense of the ingratitude of those who had received favors at His hands. How sharp, then, must have been the sword of grief that pierced His heart, especially in the last hours of His life, when He saw Himself abandoned by the people He had befriended, and even by His chosen disciples!

Where now are those numerous audiences that listened with rapt attention to His words of wisdom, and that were in admiration at His doctrine? Where is that vast crowd that greeted Him on Palm Sunday, that accompanied Him out of the city with branches of palm in their hands, and that spread their garments on the way, crying out: "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord?" They were swept away by the first tidal wave of adversity, and hidden out of sight; or perhaps some of them were idle and indifferent spectators of the insults offered to Him, if they had not even a hand in the outrages that were heaped upon Him.

Where now are they on whom our Lord worked miracles of mercy? Where is the multitude that He miraculously fed on the shores of Galilee, and that then desired to make Him their king? Where are the lepers that he cleansed, the paralyzed arms that He healed? Where are the blind, the deaf and the dumb whose sight, speech and hearing were restored? Where are the lame whom He made whole? Alas! the arm that was invigorated is not raised in defense of its Healer. The eyes that were opened shed no tears of sympathy for the great Physician. The tongues that were loosed offer no words of protest against the indignities to their Benefactor. The halt whose limbs were quickened with new life do not run to console their Friend, but betake themselves

to flight, lest they should be recognized among His disciples.

And where now are the Apostles themselves, who were the daily companions of Jesus and the witnesses of His wondrous works? They have fled in the hour of danger, and have hidden their diminished heads. Where is Judas? He rose from the Last Supper and went to the enemies of his Master, and agreed to betray Him for thirty pieces of silver. His besetting sin was avarice, which dries up the springs of affection, and sacrifices duty and friendship on the altar of Mammon. Judas does his work thoroughly. That the enemies of Jesus should make no mistake in confounding the Master with one of His disciples, he tells them that He whom he will salute with a kiss is the Christ. He prostitutes the sacred emblem of friendship to his insatiate greed. And mark the gentle rebuke of Jesus: "Friend," He says, "dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?"

And where are you now, O Peter, Prince of the Apostles, the chosen one, to whom your Leader promised to give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven? You protested a short time ago that though all should abandon their Lord, you would never forsake Him. You displayed a spasmodic and blustering courage in cutting off the ear of Malchus. But now you are quietly warming yourself at a fire, while your Master is in the hands of His enemies. When asked if you are His disciple, you protest that you know nothing about Him. You afterwards repeat your denial, and when you are told that you are a Galilean, like your Leader, for your speech is the shibboleth which betrays you, you swear that you know not

the man. You disdain even to call your Master by His name.

But there was one faithful soul among the faithless. There was one brave heart among the craven disciples, and that heart beat in the breast of a woman, and that woman was the Virgin Mother. Undaunted, she stood at the cross. While woman is not tempered like man to encounter the rough conflicts of life, she usually displays a self-sacrifice, a spirit of fortitude and sublime heroism in stemming the tide of adversity that often puts to shame the cold calculation and cautious cowardice of the sterner sex.

And it is a remarkable fact that while women have been found habitually ministering to our Lord in His public life, paying homage to Him and adoring Him, and while the daughters of Jerusalem are seen weeping for Him, bewailing and lamenting, as He is led to Mount Calvary—I say it is a remarkable fact that, while they thus honor Christ, there is not recorded in the Gospels a solitary instance of any woman ever offering an insult or indignity to Him in the whole course of His earthly career.

Another cause of interior sorrow to our blessed Lord arose from the outrages and insults that He suffered in His person, His character and His honor. Nothing is dearer to a man than his reputation and good name. Without it his influence in the community is lost or seriously impaired. The enemies of Christ knew this. They knew that if His character was blasted, all sympathy for Him would be lessened, and His power among the people would fade away. They were guilty of what I might call the crime of "poisoning the wells." No matter how sweet and pure are the waters of

a spring, give it a bad name, circulate the report that it is poisoned, and the people will shun it.

It is only by grouping together the calumnies that were uttered against Him that we can fully realize their number and malignity.

Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God. "In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Compared with the wisdom of Christ, all the sagacity of the world is folly. Yet He was treated as a fool and a visionary. In ridicule of His alleged ambition of earthly royalty, He is treated like a mock king. A crown is placed on His head, but it is a crown of thorns, and not of gold. I am persuaded that this crown was put on Him not only to excite derision, but to inflict additional pain.

He is clothed with a purple garment because purple is a royal color, but the garment was very probably a soldier's cast-off cloak. Instead of a sceptre, a reed is placed in His hands. He is blindfolded and struck in the face, and is then jeeringly asked by the bystanders to tell who it was that struck Him.

What a lesson for us! How impatient we are of contradiction or unfriendly criticism! Let us learn a lesson of humility from the God of wisdom, who became a fool for our sakes, that He might heal our pride of intellect.

Christ was sent from Heaven to found a new religion which was to be the perfection of all the religious systems that had preceded it—a religion in which the Father was to be adored in spirit and in truth. He came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law. And yet He was denounced as a religious enthusiast, as a heretic and a propagator of false doctrines.

What a lesson, again, we have here! It happens

not unfrequently that some religious mountebank will assail the religion of Christ which you profess. He will ascribe to you doctrines and practices which you abhor and repudiate. Learn, from your Master's example, never to lose your temper under the strain of such imputations, but to refute the slanders with a zeal inspired by charity.

The Lord of the Sabbath is called a Sabbath-breaker, because He healed diseases on the Sabbath day.

His enemies could not close their eyes to the miracles He wrought. They saw Him cast out devils. But they were determined that He should get no credit for His good deeds. They said: "He hath a devil, and, by the prince of devils, He casteth out devils."

He habitually preached reverence and obedience to the Mosaic law. While He tore the mask of hypocrisy from the Scribes and Pharisees, He commanded the people to obey them as the ministers of God: "The Scribes and Pharisees sit on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they say unto you, observe and do, but do not according to their works."

He commanded the people to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. He told His disciples that they should pay the tribute money for the support of the government, like other subjects. Jesus Himself paid the tax, even though He had to work a miracle to procure the money, and though His poverty and royalty should have exempted Him. And yet He is charged with being a revolutionist, a disloyal and seditious man, and a fomenter of public strife. He is charged with being an enemy of Caesar, with refusing to pay him tribute, and aspiring to an earthly throne, though He declared

that His kingdom was not of this world, and though He fled and hid Himself when His admiring followers had sought to make Him king.

The innocent Savior was denounced as a drunkard and a glutton, and the boon companion of publicans and sinners, because He consorted with sinners with the sole view to recalling them from their evil habits and leading them back to God. For He said: "I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance," and "Not they who are well, but they who are ill, have need of a physician." In a word, the God of truth is called to His face a liar and a hypocrite.

The narrative of these outrages is calculated to fill our soul with righteous wrath. But instead of venting our unprofitable indignation against the offending Jews who have long since rendered an account of their transgressions, let us turn our thoughts towards ourselves, and ask whether we are all clean of our Savior's blood. Does not the Christian who has been sanctified by the Sacraments, and enlightened by the word of God, and who afterward renounces the profession as well as the practice of his religion, and lives in habitual sin—does he not insult and mock his Redeemer? I do not presume to make this strong indictment in my own name, but on the authority of the Apostle, who tells us that, "those who were once illumined (by Baptism) have tasted also the heavenly gift (of the Eucharist) and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost (by Confirmation), have moreover tasted the good word of God, and are fallen away, crucify again unto themselves the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him." [1]

And is not the crime of the rebellious Christian more heinous than that of the persecuting Jew?

[1] Heb. vi.

The Jew sinned in ignorance. The Christian sins against the light with his eyes open.

Again St. Paul says: "A man making void the law of Moses, dieth without any mercy, under two or three witnesses: how much more, do you think, he deserveth worse punishment who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean, by which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace?"[1]

God grant that none who are within the reach of my voice to-day may be among the number of those for whom Christ was born and died in vain, or for whom He preached in vain.

Let me mention one more consideration. In this record of our Savior's life you will find a healing balm for the wounds which calumny may have inflicted on you. But you will say: It is a fearful thing to confront the world, and to look into the face of your neighbor with a foul stigma stamped upon your brow. I grant it. And if there exists a moral hero in the world, it is the man who lives down a false imputation on his good name. It is hard indeed to be under a cloud. But was not Susanna under a cloud, and did she not emerge from it with the sunlight of Heaven shining on her innocent face? Was not Sir Thomas More under a cloud? Was he not condemned to be executed for high treason? And what name is more honored to-day in English history than his? Did not Christ Himself go down to His grave branded as a malefactor by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities? But He has risen glorious and immortal from the tomb. To-day he is honored as the moral Governor of the world. We worship Him as our God, and oh! we love Him all the more

[1] Heb. x., 28.29.

for the wounds that slander inflicted on Him. And where are His calumniators to-day? They are buried in oblivion, or they are immortalized only that their names may be held up to infamy by the judgment of mankind.

Be not then cast down, but rather rejoice if sometimes you are assailed like your Divine Master by the tongue of calumny. "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven. For so they persecuted the Prophets that were before you."[1]

[1] Matt. v., 10-12.

PALM SUNDAY.

THE USE OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

MATT. XXI., 1-10.

THE ceremony of blessing and distributing palms and other green branches on this Sunday is consecrated by the venerable tradition of many centuries, and, indeed, dates back to an early period of the Church.

It continued in the English-speaking world without interruption until about the middle of the sixteenth century. In the reign of Edward VI. of England, it was forbidden to use blessed candles on Candlemas day, to use ashes blessed on Ash Wednesday, or to carry palms blessed on Palm Sunday. So intense was the hostility to the ancient religion, that the liturgy of the Church was mutilated, and an attempt was even made to expunge from the lexicon the words Martinmas, Michaelmas, Candlemas and Christmas, so that every trace of Catholic worship and usages might be obliterated. The sacred paintings were torn down from the walls of the temple of God, the organs were suppressed, the statues were removed from their niches, the lights were extinguished on the altars, and the altars themselves were demolished. With the aim of adopting a more spiritual form of worship, the innovators nourished the intellect, but allowed the other faculties to starve and languish. They forgot that the economy of divine adoration requires that man must consecrate his whole being to his Creator.

I refer to the suppression of ceremonial worship occurring three and a half centuries ago, not in a captious or complaining spirit, still less in a controversial temper. I allude to it rather to give praise to God that a more healthy sentiment animates a large portion of our separated brethren to-day. They have begun to recognize not only the utility but also the necessity of outward forms of prayer, and they admit that our very nature has a craving for it.

Until recent years the bearing of a sprig of palm was a shibboleth of exclusively Catholic faith. Thank God this is no longer the case. A considerable number of Christians outside the Catholic Church may be seen wearing palms on this solemn day.

Let us earnestly pray that the time will come when they will not only bear this emblem in their hands, but will carry our faith itself in their hearts, when they will pray in the temples in which their forefathers worshiped, when they will kneel at the altars at which they knelt, when they will receive the Sacraments which we receive, and will partake with us of the banquet of Divine love; when they will venerate the Saints whom we revere, and have with us "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

The Catholic Church, with that wisdom which is the fruit of age and experience, as well as of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has an intimate knowledge of human nature. She knows that an abstract religion is not only inadequate to our wants, but it is intrinsically impossible. It must be embodied in some forms, and must have some outward expression; for, we are men and not angels. She knows that we have a body as well as a soul; therefore, she appeals to the whole man. She

speaks not only to our intellect, but also to our imagination and senses, to our feelings and emotional nature. She bids all the faculties of our soul and all the powers of our body to unite in one grand chorus of praise and adoration to our God and Savior.

But, you may object, is not that religion which appeals to the senses, one of sentiment and emotion? I grant it. Are not sentiment and emotion a constituent part of our being, as well as reason, and were they not given to us for our exercise and guidance? Not by reason alone doth man live, but by his heart and feelings also. I have not less faith in the man who is guided by his heart than in the man who is controlled by his head. Take away the poetry from his nature, take away his sense of the beautiful and harmonious, and he shrinks to a cold, calculating machine. To eliminate emotion and feelings from humanity is like blotting out the spring-tide and the flowers from the seasons.

Observe with what zeal political men have recourse to symbols and parades, to promote the interests of their party. On the eve of an election they will inaugurate torchlight processions, carrying banners raised aloft on which are inscribed the portraits of the leading candidates. The scene is enlivened by bands of music discoursing soul-stirring and patriotic airs. These demonstrations attract the multitude and arouse their enthusiasm more successfully than the most fervid eloquence of words.

And why should not the friends of Christianity adopt similar means to promote the cause of righteousness? A solemn procession accompanied by sacred banners bearing the image of Christ and of His Saints, chanting hymns of praise, fills us

with pious emotions, and sometimes melts us into tears. A decorous religious pageant speaks with a polyglot language like the voice of Pentecost, and is at once intelligible to people of various tongues and nations.

The emblems and rites that the Church employs in her public liturgy may be called the book of the unlearned. They serve to concentrate the faculties and to rivet the attention; they pour into the soul a flood of religious knowledge more copiously and speedily than oral teaching could impart. They stamp on the soul an impression more vivid and lasting than the most eloquent discourse. Even to those who enjoy the advantages of a religious education, symbols and ceremonies are invaluable aids to piety. Some there are who profess not to need such helps to devotion. Be it so. You are not obliged to use them. As for myself, these hallowed memorials are to me a source of strength and consolation. The contemplation of the crucifix arrests my scattered thoughts and discloses, at a glance, the sufferings my Savior endured for me.

Exterior rites and ceremonies are the handmaids of interior worship; they serve to foster devotion just as food nourishes animal life. The same God who has said: "The true adorer shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth," has also given this command: "Praise ye the Lord in His holy places. Praise Him with sound of trumpet. Praise Him with psaltery and harp. Praise Him with timbrel and choir. Praise Him with strings and organs."[1] Thus we see that the same Lord who exhorts us to enter into the privacy of our chambers, and pour out our praises to Him from the depth of our hearts, commands us also to as-

[1] Ps. cl., 4.5.

semble in His holy temple, and give Him outward adoration, as you do when you attend the public services of the Church to hear the praises of God sung by the choir.

It is true that God uttered this complaint against the children of Israel: "This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from Me."[1] It is also true that He was displeased with their sacrifices. "Offer sacrifice no more in vain: Incense is an abomination to Me. The new moons, and the Sabbaths, and the other festivals I will not abide. . . . Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well . . . and then come to Me: if your sins be as scarlet they shall be made as white as snow, and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."[2]

But if He censured their public prayers, it was only because they did not come from the heart; if He rejected their sacrifices, it was not because they were intrinsically evil, but because they were not accompanied by a penitent spirit.

The Prophet Joel thus addresses the Hebrew people: "Be converted to Me with all your heart, and rend your hearts and not your garments." He then proceeds: "Blow the trumpet in Sion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather together the people. Between the porch and the altar, the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep and shall say: 'Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people.'"[3] In the first part of this exhortation the Prophet points out the absolute necessity of interior sorrow. In the second part he insists on the duty of performing some public act of expiation, penance and humiliation, as is done by you when

[1] Isaiah xxix., 13. [2] *Ibid.*, i., 18. [3] Joel ii., 12, 17.

you have your foreheads marked with asnes on Ash Wednesday or when you observe the fast and abstinence of Lent.

In the same religious spirit you are assembled to-day at the blessing and distribution of palms and at the solemn procession through the Church, to commemorate Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Nearly two thousand years ago two memorable processions occurred, totally different in their scope and character. One took place in the imperial City of Pagan Rome, the city of worldly ambition and earthly glory. The other occurred in Jerusalem, the city of peace and of spiritual joys and aspirations.

Julius Caesar enters Rome in a golden chariot drawn by white steeds which are richly caparisoned. The streets through which he passes are decorated with precious silks and tapestry. He is preceded by lictors, he is surrounded by the flower of the Roman legions, and is followed by captive kings, princes and generals, whom he has conquered in war.

Yet the ovation given to Caesar was formal and conventional. The procession on that occasion was of a spectacular and theatrical character. The ceremonies were stamped with the official seal. They were pre-arranged by the civil authorities, and paid for from the taxes wrung from the people. Caesar in his pageant excited the admiration, or provoked the envy, but he did not command the love of the people.

About seventy-eight years afterwards our Savior enters Jerusalem, seated on an humble beast of burden. The outpouring of the people is spontaneous and unpremeditated. Instead of banners, the multitude carry palm branches in their hands.

Instead of silks and tapestry, they strew their garments on the way. There is a touch of nature in this. There are no lictors going before Him, no courtiers attending Him, no soldiers surrounding Him, no captive princes following Him. He who came to rescue man from the bondage of sin, would have no slaves in His train. Among those who followed Him were the sick whom He had healed, and the dead whom He had raised to life, and the hungry whom He had fed, and the sinners He had reclaimed, and the ignorant He had enlightened by His preaching, and the children He had blessed. They greeted their Messiah, crying out: "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." There was only one discordant note in the symphony of praise. It came from the Pharisees, who besought our Lord to stop these acclamations. But He answered: "Amen, I say to you, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." This ovation was a popular demonstration inspired by love and gratitude for their Benefactor.

My dear Brethren, greet your King with all the simple faith, the glowing love and pious enthusiasm with which He was welcomed by His disciples on the first Palm Sunday.

Earthly rulers may be flattered and intoxicated by the vain pomp, the military parades and dazzling demonstrations of their subjects. But our spiritual King will be content with nothing short of the homage of our hearts. The true adorer must adore the Lord in spirit and in truth. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world. He despised all earthly pomp.

"Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory

shall enter in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." Ye princes, children of the Most High, open wide the gates of your hearts, that the King of glory may enter and reign therein.

Unite today with the millions of your fellow-Christians throughout the world, and say with them: "Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, to our God, out of every tribe and nation and people and tongue, and hast made us to our God a kingdom, and we shall reign."[1] With Thy grace we shall reign over our passions here, and shall reign with Thee in eternal glory hereafter.

And as you assist in commemorating the triumphal entry of your Lord into the earthly Jerusalem, so may you have the happiness of uniting one day with God's elect in following the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem, and singing with them: "Salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen."[2]

[1] Apoc. v., 9.10. [2] Apoc. vii.

EASTER SUNDAY.

THE ROAD OF SUFFERING IS THE PATH TO GLORY.

LUKE XXIV., 26. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?"

THIS is a day of universal joy throughout the Christian world. We no longer behold our altars covered with badges of mourning to commemorate the passion, crucifixion and death of our Savior; but we see them arrayed in festive garments to celebrate His glorious Resurrection. No longer does the *Stabat Mater,* or the *Miserere, or the Lamentations*, or the other plaintive notes of the Church resound in this temple, but the *Gloria in Excelsis* with frequent *Alleluias* and *Hosannas* now greet our ears once more.

We no longer contemplate in spirit the penitent multitude striking their breasts and following the suffering Redeemer as He bears His cross to Calvary; but we behold Mary Magdalen and the other Marys, with the Apostles, hastening with eager and joyful steps from the tomb from which their Lord had risen.

Rejoice, then, with exceeding great joy. "Rejoice in the Lord, again, I say, rejoice." "This is the day which the Lord made, let us be glad and rejoice therein." "There is a time to weep and a time to laugh," says the Wise Man. This is the season of gladness. The night of sorrow and commiseration is past, the day of rejoicing is at hand. Rejoice, then, for your Savior's sake, that His sufferings are over and His joys have begun, that He has broken the ligaments of the grave, pene-

trated the door of the sepulchre, and conquered death; that He has entered into His eternal rest. His Resurrection shall never be followed by death, for "Christ, rising from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him."[1]

Rejoice for your own sakes, since the Resurrection of Jesus is the pledge, the hope, and the precursor of your resurrection. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them who have slept through Jesus, God will bring with Him."[2] In the exuberance of your joy call upon all creatures to bless the Lord. Sing with the Prophet Daniel: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all forever. Ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord. Ye heavens, bless the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all forever. Sun and moon, bless the Lord, stars of heaven, bless the Lord. Let the earth bless the Lord. Sons of men, bless the Lord. Let Israel bless the Lord. Let them praise and exalt Him above all forever."[3]

Jesus Christ announces to you to-day the important truth that the glory of His Resurrection is the fruit of His passion. I mean the accidental glory incident to His humanity; not the essential glory inherent in His divinity. While two of His disciples were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus, discoursing on the crucifixion, Jesus in the guise of a stranger, joined them, and they said to Him: We had hoped that Christ would redeem Israel from Gentile bondage, and would re-establish the kingdom on a grander scale, and rule as a conqueror. But our hopes are shaken, for He died a shameful death on the cross. And Jesus said to them: "O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the Prophets have

[1] Rom. vi., 9. [2] I. Thes. iv., 13. [3] Dan. iii., 58-90.

spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?"[1] If He had not trod the path of suffering and humiliation, He would not be the Messiah foretold by the Prophets. St. Paul thus expresses the same thought: "Jesus debased Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *For which cause* God also hath exalted Him and hath given Him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow."[2]

Let us see to what degree hath God exalted Him. That sacred body which was bruised and tortured to such an extent on Good Friday, that a Prophet said of Him: "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head there is no soundness"[3] in Him; that body is transfigured and assumes a heavenly aspect. In the language of the Apostle, "It is sown in dishonor, it rises in glory; it is sown in weakness, it rises in power; it is sown an animal body, it rises a spiritual body."[4]

That countenance on which sorrow and suffering had stamped their image beams to-day resplendent with the glory of His divinity. Those temples which were pierced with thorns are crowned to-day with a halo of celestial glory. Those eyes which were sealed in death are radiant with beauty and majesty. On Good Friday Jesus was placed at the bar of an unjust judge. The outlaw Barabbas was preferred before Him. A reed was placed in His hands in mockery of His assumption of royalty. He was followed to Calvary by an infuriated rabble who loaded Him with insults: "He is the reproach of men and the

[1] Luke xxiv., 25.26. [2] Phil. ii., 9.10. [3] Isaiah i., 6.
[4] I. Cor. xv., 43.44.

outcast of the people." To-day He is raised above principalities and powers, above angels and archangels. He is constituted the supreme Judge of the living and the dead. The sceptre of authority is in His hands. He is honored by hosts of angels in Heaven who sing hosannas to His name, and the chant of praise which they utter is taken up and re-echoed by thousands of choirs here on earth, and by millions of His faithful servants who proclaim Him King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and sing: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and benediction for ever and ever. Amen."

What Jesus says of Himself in the Gospel, He also applies to you: "It behooveth (you) to suffer and so to enter into (your) glory." This is also the doctrine of the Apostle: "Through trials and temptations it behooveth us to enter into the kingdom of God." The road of suffering is the path which leads to glory. This is the central thought of my discourse to you today. But is not any allusion to the cross ill-timed and out of place on this festive occasion? By no means, for so long as we are pilgrims on this earth, we are walking under the shadow of the cross. When our Lord was transfigured on Mount Thabor, Moses and Elias appeared with Him in majesty, and the approaching death of Christ was the subject of their conversation: "They spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem." If the cross was a fitting theme for these two great Prophets, even amid the splendors of Mount Thabor, it cannot be inopportune for us, even amid the joys of the Resurrection. I repeat, then, the way of adversity is the path that leads

to glory, and this is true even of human glory and earthly fame.

The great generals of ancient and modern times — Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Washington and Napoleon—were not crowned with earthly laurels until they had endured many a privation and rushed through the smoke of many a battlefield. The illustrious sea captains celebrated in history did not purchase their renown by languidly lying at anchor in some secure harbor, but by braving the perils of the ocean and struggling with formidable foes. The scholar and the professional man were obliged to devote themselves with assiduous attention to studies in their youth, and to deny themselves the gratification of enervating pleasures, before they were able to reach the goal of scholastic and professional eminence. The successful merchant was compelled for many years to rise early and go late to rest and to endure privations before fortune smiled upon him.

Now if temporal honors and wealth are purchased only by a life of self-denial and sacrifice, how can we expect to secure the eternal glory of Heaven without the same conditions, particularly since the life of a Christian is one of self-restraint. You are Christians. You glory in that name. You would not exchange it for all the high-sounding titles of kings and emperors. But do not forget that if this name hath its dignity it hath also annexed to it corresponding obligations. *Christian* is no empty appellation, but one full of solemn signficance. A Christian, as the very name implies, is a disciple or follower of Christ. A Christian is one who reproduces in his own life the virtues and character of his Divine Master, who, in the language of St. Paul, carries about him "the mortification of Jesus, that the life also

of Jesus may be made manifest in his mortal flesh."[1] A Christian is one who walks in the path traced out for him by his heavenly Guide. A Christian, in a word, is another Christ.

Is it not, therefore, a contradiction in terms that we should have nothing in common with our Master but the name? Is it not unnatural and monstrous that there should be no conformity between Christ, the Head, and us, the members? The members of a body should always be proportioned and adapted to the head. A delicate body under a head crowned with thorns is a hideous deformity. Is it not unjust and unreasonable that we, the soldiers of Christ, should hope to share with our victorious Leader the treasures of the kingdom of Heaven, and yet have no part in His warfare on earth? We are glad to accompany our Lord to Mount Thabor, but we are not willing to follow Him to Calvary. We are eager to drink of the torrent of delights with which He inebriates His elect in the land of the living, but we reject from our lips the bitter chalice of His Passion. We are anxious to receive the reward of faith, but the sacrifices and humiliations that our faith exacts we shrink from undergoing.

Scholars of every profession are ambitious of following their teachers. The students of medicine and of law aim at imitating their medical and legal professors. The student of theology strives not only to acquire the knowledge, but also to copy the virtues of his teacher. The Jew boasts of being an exact observer of the law of Moses. Even the Mohammedan is proud of carrying out the principles of the false prophet. And shall not we esteem it our joy and our crown, as well

[1] II. Cor. iv., 10.

as our sacred duty, to follow the teachings of our beloved Master, Jesus Christ?

Now what says our Teacher? What conditions does He lay down for being His disciples on earth, and sharing in His Resurrection hereafter? "If any one," He declares, "will be My disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me." Here our Lord requires us to take up our cross, not occasionally, not merely in penetential seasons, but every day without intermission. "Enter ye in," He says, "at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth to life, and few are they that find it!"[1] "There is no other way to life and true internal peace than the way of the cross and daily mortification. Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, thou wilt find no higher way above, nor a safer way beneath than the way of the holy cross."[2]

Listen again to your Master: "Amen, amen, I say to you unless the grain of wheat fall to the ground, and die, it remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life, shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life everlasting."[3] What a striking illustration! As the grain of wheat must first die and rot, and be covered with the snows of winter, and drenched with the rains of spring, before it comes forth warmed and ripened by the summer's sun; in like manner we must crucify our flesh with its vices and concupiscences, we must die to our sins by a spirit of mortification, we must be chastened by the snows of affliction before we can spring forth to a new

[1] Matt. vii., 13.14. [2] à Kempis. [3] John xxii., 24.25.

life of grace here, and bring forth fruits of salvation hereafter. O! how sweet and consoling are the words of the Apostle: "A faithful saying: if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." [1] "God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life and resurrection, by whom we are saved and delivered." [2]

More than four hundred years ago Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos in Spain and steered his course through the hitherto unexplored ocean, in quest of a new world. After having braved many storms from without, and endured many hardships from his crew, he succeeded at last in discovering this great American Continent. And when he returned to Spain, bearing with him in triumph some of the products of the new hemisphere, as trophies of his successful voyage, a shout of joy and exultation rang throughout Europe, and the people were filled with an eager desire to follow their great Captain across the seas and take possession of the wealth that awaited their grasp in this new country.

Jesus Christ, infinitely mightier than Columbus, after having crossed the stormy ocean of life, after having passed through the narrow strait of death, has taken possession of a new world. He has revealed to you "a new heaven and new earth," which were hitherto inaccessible to the human race. Standing on the shores of this new kingdom, He turns to you. He appeals to you to follow Him. Come after Me, He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Come and share with Me My new possessions. Behold I have marked out for you the way you are to take. I

[1] II. Tim. ii., 11.12. [2] Introit of Holy Thursday Mass.

have erected for you a storm-proof ship which is My Church. I have left you an infallible chart to guide you in your course, that is the word of God and My Gospels. I Myself will be always at the helm to steer your course. Be not disheartened. Fear not storms and persecutions from abroad, nor the commotions of passions from within. Amid the lowering clouds look up to Me, "the Author and Finisher of your faith." I have left you the anchor of hope to keep you steady and confident amidst the fluctuations of the waves.

My Brethren, be animated with a holy enthusiam and desire of possessing this heavenly Kingdom. Follow your Savior to this Land of Promise—a land not flowing with milk and honey, like the Promised Land of old, but flowing with "the waters of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb," a land where blooms the tree of life. Here you will find a city, not made with human hands, but of which God Himself is the Architect and Builder—a city not composed of perishable materials, but consisting of everlasting precious stones, reflecting the glory of the Divinity. Here is that blessed country where is found the freshness and exuberance of perpetual spring, without the vicissitudes of scorching heat and piercing cold.

Oh, yearn for that life, where there is no old age nor sickness, nor death, for the tree of life, says St. John, will preserve the citizens of that land in perpetual youth, freshness and vigor. Desire that country where no war nor dissension exists, for the Prince of Peace reigns there, and envy and ambition, fomenters of discord, shall be forever excluded from that home. Seek that land where there is no sorrow nor discontent nor gnaw-

ing care, "for God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," and their joy and rest shall be everlasting.

LOW SUNDAY.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE.

JOHN XX., 19-31. "Peace be to you."

NEARLY two thousand years ago the first words that were uttered to announce the birth of the Savior of mankind was the angelic anthem containing a proclamation of peace to the world: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." And the first greeting of the risen Savior to His assembled Apostles was also a message of blessed peace: "Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you."

Christ's mission on earth was to establish a triple peace in the hearts of men—peace with God by the observance of his commandments, peace with our fellow-men by the practice of justice and charity, and peace within our own breasts by keeping our passions subject to reason, and our reason in harmony with the Divine law.

He came, above all, "to break down the middle wall of partition" that divided nation from nation, that alienated tribe from tribe, and people from people, and to make them all one family, acknowledging the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Jesus Christ.

But when looking back and contemplating the wars that have ravaged the Christian world during the last twenty centuries, some persons might be tempted, at first sight, to exclaim in anguish of heart that the mission of Christ was a failure.

My purpose, in the remarks that I shall make, is to disabuse the faint-hearted of this discouraging impression, and to show that Christ's mission has not failed, but that the cause of peace has made decisive and reassuring progress, and the advances it has already made inspire the hope of its ultimate success.

It is by comparisons and contrasts that we can most effectually gauge the results of Christian civilization.

Let us compare the military history of the Roman Empire from its foundation to the time of Augustus Caesar, with the military record of our American Republic, from the close of the Revolution to the present time.

In Pagan Rome war was the rule, peace was the exception. The Temple of Janus in Rome was always open in time of war, and was closed in time of peace. From the reign of Romulus to the time of Augustus Caesar, embracing a period of seven hundred years, the Temple of Janus was always open, except twice, when it was closed for only six years. It was subsequently closed at the birth of Christ, as if to symbolize the pacific mission of the Redeemer of mankind.

The United States has existed as a sovereign nation for about one hundred and twenty years, since the close of the Revolution. During that period we have had four wars—the War with England, from 1812 to 1815; the War with Mexico, from 1845 to 1848; the Civil War, from 1861 to 1865, and the recent Spanish War. The combined length of these campaigns was about ten years. Hence we see that the United States has enjoyed twelve years of peace for one year of war, while the Roman Empire beheld less than

one year of tranquillity for every century of military engagement.

I may remark in passing, that at least three of these four military campaigns might have been easily averted by peaceful arbitration, and that a large share of the responsibility rests at our doors.

What is the history of the Hebrew people as recorded in the pages of the Old Testament, but a narrative of warfare? The Sacred Chronicle, from Moses to the Maccabees, comprising fourteen hundred years, presents an almost unbroken series of wars of defence, of invasion, or of extermination. So continuous were military campaigns during that long period, that a sacred writer refers to a time in the year when hostilities were annually resumed: "It came to pass at the return of the year, at the time when kings go forth to war."[1] They had their season for fighting as well marked as we have our season for planting and reaping.

But the blessed influence of our Christian civilization has been experienced not only in reducing the number of wars, but still more in mitigating the horrors of military strife.

Prior to the dawn of Christianity the motto of the conqueror was "Vae victis," "Woe to the vanquished." The captured cities were pillaged and laid waste. The wives and daughters of the defeated nation became the prey of the ruthless soldiery. The conquered generals and army were obliged to grace the triumphs of the victors, before they were condemned to death or to ignominious bondage. Alexander the Great, after the capture of the city of Tyre, ordered two thousand of the inhabitants to be crucified, and the remain-

[1] II. Samuel ii.

der of the population were put to death or sold into slavery.

How different was the conduct of General Scott after his successful siege of the city of Mexico. As soon as the enemy surrendered, not a single soldier or citizen was sacrificed to the vengeance of the victorious army, and not a single family was exiled from their native land.

During the siege of Jerusalem, in the year 70 of the Christian era, under Titus, the Roman general, more than a million Jews perished by the sword or by famine. Nearly one hundred thousand Jews were carried into captivity. The sacred vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem were borne away by the blood-stained hands of the Roman army. Simon, the Hebrew chieftain, with the flower of his troops, was conducted to Rome, where he graced the triumph of the Roman General, and then a rope was thrown around his neck, and he was dragged to the Forum, where he was cruelly tormented and put to death. And yet Titus was not accused by his cotemporaries of exceptional cruelty. On the contrary, he was regarded as a benevolent ruler, and was called "The delight of the human race."

Let us contrast the conduct of Titus towards the Jews with General Grant's treatment of the defeated Confederate forces. When General Lee surrendered his sword to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, he and his brave army were permitted to return without molestation to their respective homes.

Imagine General Lee and his veterans led in chains to Washington, followed by the spoils and treasures of Southern homes and Southern sanctuaries. Imagine the same Confederate soldiers compelled to erect in the capital of the nation, a

monument to commemorate their own defeat and the triumph of the conqueror. Would not the whole nation, North as well as South of Mason and Dixon's line, rise up in its might and denounce a degradation so revolting to their humanity?

The Roman and the American General, in their opposite conduct, were reflecting the spirit of the times in which they lived. Titus, in exercising cruelty towards the vanquished, was following the traditions of Paganism. Grant, in his magnanimity towards the Confederate troops, was obeying the mandates of Christian civilization.

The friends and advocates of International Arbitration are engaged in the most noble and benevolent mission that can engross the attention of mankind—a mission to which are attached the most sublime title and the most precious reward. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

I beg you to consider what progress has already been made in the beneficent work in which they are enlisted.

A hundred years ago disputes between individuals were commonly decided by a duel. Thanks to the humanizing influence of a Christian public opinion, these disagreements are now usually adjusted by legislation and conciliation. Have we not reason to indulge the hope that the same pacific agencies that have checked the duel between individuals, will, in God's own time, check the duel between nations?

In our school days, the most odious and contemptible creature we used to encounter was the bully who played the tyrant towards the weak, but cringed before his strong companions. But still more intolerable is a bullying nation that

picks a quarrel with a feeble nation, with the base intent of seizing her possessions. This hectoring power is playing towards a weaker neighbor the role that the impious King Achab acted towards Naboth. When the King demanded Naboth's vineyard Naboth answered: "The Lord forbid that I should give to thee the inheritance of my fathers." But there was no Board of Arbitration in those days; might was right with Achab. He robbed Naboth not only of his vineyard but also of his life.

Let the friends and advocates of International Arbitration use every effort to protect the weak against the strong, and then to the ruler of a feeble nation conscious of the justice of its cause, may be applied the words of the poet:

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

First—He is armed with the consciousness of the sacred right of property.

Second—He is armed with the shield of an enlightened public opinion.

Third—He is armed with the conviction that his cause will be adjudicated by the equitable decision of a Board of Arbitration.

This amicable system, while protecting the rights of the weak, will not wound or humiliate the national pride of the strong, since it does not attempt to trench on the sovereignty or autonomy of the mightier power.

I can recall at least five instances within the last twenty years in which international conflicts have been amicably settled by arbitration. The dispute between Germany and Spain regarding the Caroline Islands was adjusted by Pope Leo XIII. in 1886. The Samoan difficulty between Germany and the United States was settled by

a conference held in Berlin in 1889. A treaty of peace between the United States and Mexico was signed in Washington at the close of Cleveland's administration, and a war between France and Germany—perhaps a general European conflict—was averted by the Algeciras Conference in Morocco.

Lastly, President Roosevelt, by his timely and tactful intervention, put an end to the late destructive war between Russia and Japan. As a recognition of his daring act of humanity (for failure would have seriously compromised his official dignity), he was presented the Nobel prize, including a gold medal, which, no doubt, he esteems far less for its intrinsic value than for the memorable historic incident which it commemorates.

If international arbitration helps to avert threatening hostilities, the avoidance of any entangling alliance removes us from the danger of provoking them.

The Father of his Country, in his Farewell Address, which he left as a precious legacy to his countrymen, earnestly exhorts them to abstain from being involved in entangling alliances with other nations, and to cultivate friendship with all of them.

This solemn admonition was reaffirmed by Jefferson in his Inaugural Address, which has been handed down from one administration to another as a sacred oracle, and has now acquired almost the force and authority of law.

"Observe good faith and justice towards all nations," writes Washington, "cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct. It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and

too often novel example of a people always guided by exalted justice and benevolence.

"Nothing is more essential than that inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others should be excluded; and that in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, . . . is a slave to its animosity, or to its affections. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, . . . when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. . . .

"Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence, she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are entirely foreign to our concerns. . . . Therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her policies, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or her enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course . . .

"Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? . . . Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor or caprice? . . .

"Our policy is to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."

Since these memorable words were written in 1796, experience and observation, far from weakening their force, have confirmed their wisdom and foresight, and their observance has contributed no small share to our peace and prosperity.

As soon as we form an alliance, offensive or defensive, with any other nation, we make her quarrels and hostilities our own. Her enemies are our enemies. We are tied to her chariot wheels. We must perforce increase our land and naval armament to suit her purposes. She will urge and almost compel us to do so, if we are to remain her champion. It is implied in the compact.

By throwing ourselves into the arms of one interested ally we alienate ourselves from other nations, which become inflamed towards us with a spirit of jealousy, hatred, or even of open hostility.

The European powers are impelled to form coalitions for reasons which, happily for us, do not affect our country. Their history is marked by traditional and inveterate rivalries and animosities towards one another.

Each nation has on her borders a formidable Power, one watching the other with a jealous eye, eager to profit by her weakness, and to wrest from her a slice of her territory, if not to absorb it all. Hence they all feel compelled in self-defence to be fully armed, and to form as many combinations as they can with other nations.

When our forefathers sailed across the Atlantic to this Western World, they cut adrift from those long-standing and deep-rooted national rivalries and encounters in which the mother countries have been embroiled. And, thank God, our own internecine conflict between the States is as much an event of the past as the wars in England between the houses of York and Lancaster.

Fortunately for us, our geographical situation isolates us from dangerous proximity to aggressive adversaries. We are providentially protected

by our national boundaries. We are bordered on the East by the Atlantic Ocean, on the West by the Pacific; we are bounded on the North by friendly colonies, and on the South by a sister republic which, far from arousing our apprehension, sets a great value on our strength and protection against foreign invasion.

Hence, instead of forming leagues with other governments, let us continue to pursue a more humane, enlightened and statesmanlike policy by fostering and developing our commercial relations with all the nations of the world.

Let the streams of commerce flow between Europe and America like invigorating blood coursing through the arteries of the human body, diffusing life and activity, and all forming, as it were, one social organism, each member exulting in the health and growth of the other, and stimulating the remotest parts with renewed energy and activity. Let our business interests with those commonwealths be so inseparable and reciprocal that the injury to one will be felt by the others, and the prosperity of each will be shared by all.

Besides entering into closer commercial relations with European nations, let us form a still more friendly compact with them by welcoming their thrifty sons and daughters to share our fortunes in this favored country. It cannot be denied that our exceptional prosperity, as a nation, in the past century has been due in no small measure to the tide of immigration.

We are a composite Commonwealth, evolved from various races, peoples, and tongues. The blood of Celt, Teuton and Anglo-Saxon, of Latin and Lithuanian, of Slavonian and Scandinavian, flows through the veins of Columbia. It would be unnatural for the Mother to be partial to one race

at the expense of the others. She would arouse the jealousy of her sons at home, and of their kinsfolk across the seas.

Let us continue to invite the people of Europe to our shores. Let us give them the right hand of fellowship, embracing them as brothers, holding out to them every opportunity of advancing their material interests, inspiring them with so great an admiration for our civil and political institutions that they may be impelled to be incorporated with us, becoming "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," begetting and rearing children who, while they cherish the land of their fathers, will love still more the land of their birth. May the emigrants become so enamored of our country that they will be eager to exclaim in the language of Ruth to Noemi: "Where you shall dwell, we also will dwell, your people shall be our people, and your God our God." [1]

It is surprising with what rapidity the descendants of emigrants become assimilated with the native population. Climatic influences, intermarriages and education, social, political and business relations so mould and shape the physical and mental texture of the new generation that it is often difficult to determine to what European nation their grandparents or even their parents, belonged, unless their ancestry be disclosed by their patronymic.

When we contemplate the constant and steady stream of emigrants flowing from Europe to this land of promise—not bent on deeds of war but of peace and industry, not on a mission of destruction but of construction, not coming to exterminate but to join hands with the descendants of the early settlers in developing the resources

[1] Ruth i., 16.

of the country; and when we survey this scene, the glorious vision of the Prophet Isaiah is pictured before us: "Lift up thine eyes round about and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee."

Let us cherish the hope that the day is not far off when the reign of the Prince of Peace shall be firmly established on the earth, and the spirit of the Gospel will so far sway the minds and hearts of rulers and cabinets, that international disputes will be decided, not by standing armies, but by permanent courts of arbitration—when they will be settled, not on the battle-field, but in the halls of conciliation, and will be adjusted, not by the sword, but by the pen, which "is mightier than the sword."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD.

JOHN X., 11-16.

AMONG the various titles given to our Savior in the Gospels, there is none that inspires more love and confidence, or that more adequately portrays His beneficent mission on earth than the appellation of the Good Shepherd. The most ancient paintings of our Lord that have come down to us represent Him in the character of a shepherd, bearing on His shoulders a sheep that had strayed from the fold.

Throughout His whole ministry, our blessed Redeemer abundantly proves how faithfully He exhibits in His life the qualities of a good shepherd. He is, indeed, the ideal Shepherd, and the more all pastors of souls imitate this Divine Model, the nearer they approach to perfection.

Our Good Shepherd has an intimate knowledge of all His sheep, whom "He calls by name." He conducts them to the most delicious pastures, nourishing them even with His own body and blood.

He leads them to the waters of eternal life. By His secret inspiration He tenderly recalls to the fold those that had wandered away through their own perversity and the neglect of the hireling, and He binds up the wounds of those that had been torn by the thorns of sin and the rapacious wolves of pernicious doctrine. And lastly, the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep.

Under the most appropriate figure of a sheepfold, our Lord points out the essential unity of

faith that should bind together the members of His Church. He could not have chosen a happier illustration to enforce this fundamental doctrine of unity of belief.

All the sheep of a fold instinctively cling together, and if they are suddenly divided, they are eager to be united again. They move along the same path, they are protected by the same enclosure. They feed on the same pastures, and slake their thirst at the same running brook. They obey the voice of the same shepherd, and fly at the approach of strangers.

So was it in the designs of Christ in establishing the Church, that all His disciples should be guided by the same rule of doctrinal and moral teaching, that they should be nourished by the same spiritual food, refreshed by the same waters of grace, that they should hearken to the same divinely constituted pastors, and avoid all erroneous and self-appointed teachers.

Our Lord forms other comparisons with His Church, all of which make for unity. He likens His Church to a fruitful vine. "I am the vine," He says to His disciples, "ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." The vine shoots its branches in various directions, each branch producing fruit, but all of them necessarily connected with the parent stem, from which they draw their invigorating sap. So did our Savior intend that His Church should grow and expand like a fruitful vine, spreading its branches far and wide, so that multitudes of every nation should find a refreshing shade beneath its spacious foliage and be nourished by its heavenly fruit.

Again, the Church of God is called a kingdom. The Archangel Gabriel said to Mary: Thy Son

"shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." In every well-ordered kingdom, there is but one king, one system of government, one administration, one uniform body of laws which all the subjects are bound to observe. In like manner, in Christ's spiritual kingdom, there must be one chief ruler, to whom all owe spiritual allegiance, one form of Church government, one body of laws which all Christians are obliged to obey. Where this uniformity does not exist, there is anarchy, and "every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate."

Finally the Church is compared to a human body: "As in one body," says St. Paul, "we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every member one of another."

Observe, my Brethren, the intimate and harmonious relations of the members of the human body to one another, and their subordination to the head, the seat of reason. My head commands, and my feet conduct me to this church; my head commands, and my hand is uplifted; my head commands, and my lips are opened, and my tongue gives utterance to speech.

So has Christ ordained that His Church, His mystical body, composed of divers members, should be in accord with one another, and should all be united to one *visible* head whom they are bound to obey; for a visible body must have a visible head. It would be impossible for the members of the Church to continue long in unity of belief without a central authority and a supreme tribunal by which all questions in dispute in matters of faith and morals should be decided. Without this ruling head, the Christian body would soon disintegrate.

The last words that our Savior uttered before

His Passion include an earnest prayer for unity of faith: "I pray for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they all may be one, as Thou, Father in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." As Thou, Father, and I are one in essence, so I pray that all My disciples may be united together in the bonds of common belief and charity, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me; because the unity of the Church is the most luminous evidence of My divine mission.

The last prayer of St. Paul, like that of his Master, was a solemn warning against schisms and dissensions in the Church, and a yearning cry for unity. Shortly before his martyrdom in Rome, Paul writes a letter from his prison, and if the words of the Apostle should always command respect, with how much more reverence are they to be received when they are echoed from the depth of his dungeon, and constitute, as it were, his last will and testament? "I," he says, "the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all humility and meekness, with patience supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. One body and one Spirit, as ye are called in one hope of your vocation. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all."[1]

As you all, he says, adore one God, and not many gods, as you recognize the same Mediator and not many mediators, as you are sanctified by one and the same Holy Spirit, as you aspire to the same heavenly kingdom, and not separate kingdoms, so

[1] Eph. iv., 1-6.

must you all be united in professing your faith in all the truths of Divine revelation.

Indeed, our reason alone, apart from revelation, should convince us that God could not be the Author of various conflicting systems of religion. God is essentially one. He is truth itself. He is not the God of dissension but of peace and order. I see perfect unity and harmony in the laws that govern this physical world we inhabit. I observe a marvellous concord and correlation in the planetary system above us, every star moving in its proper sphere, but each in unison with the others, and all subordinated to a central orb.

Why should there not also be consonance and unity in that spiritual creation, the Church of God, the grandest conception of His providence, and the most bounteous manifestation of His goodness and love? Heresy is opposed to unity of belief. A heretic is one who selects certain articles of faith which he is pleased to believe, and who rejects others which are not acceptable to his private judgment. He, therefore, makes his own creed, which he prefers to that of the Church universal. He usurps the judicial robes of those who are divinely appointed to judge; he becomes a dictator instead of a follower of Christ. He may endeavor to justify himself by saying: The doctrines which I reject, have crept into the Church's code through human corruption. But this is a gratuitous assumption. Which is more worthy of belief, the unbroken tradition of twenty centuries or the unsupported affirmation of a single individual?

Would not a citizen of the United States be regarded as disloyal to his country if he were to determine in his own mind which laws of the Commonwealth he should observe and which he should

disregard? Now the Church of Christ has as complete a system of government as the state possesses, and its ordinances have at least as solemn a sanction as the civil laws. It would be, therefore, a grievous impiety for any citizen of the Republic of the Church to formulate his own creed and prescribe to himself the religious tenets he would accept and those he would repudiate.

The Jews to whom our Lord preached had a great admiration for Him; yet few of them were worthy of becoming His disciples, because they refused to accept *all* His teachings. Many of them regarded Him as a great prophet, but they would not recognize Him as the Messiah and the Son of God. The Pharisees thought Him too lax on the Sabbath observance, and too rigid regarding the indissolubility of marriage. The Sadducees were edified by His discourses, but they rejected His doctrine proclaiming the resurrection of the dead.

The Herodians were eager to hear him, but they repudiated His declaration that tribute should be paid to the civil authorities.

Others hung upon His words, and followed Him as His disciples, until He told them that He would give His body to eat and His blood to drink, and then they were so shocked and scandalized that "They went back and walked no more with Him."

The Scribes were among His frequent audience, but when He announced that He forgave the sins of the palsied man they lost faith in Him and denounced Him as a blasphemer.

You observe that all those persons had much to commend in Christ, but their capital sin was in dissenting from some of His doctrines. And is not this precisely the condition of dissenting Christian bodies today? Do they not give a divided allegiance to the Divine Teacher?

One will say to me: I accept all the articles of the Creed, save one, and that one is at variance with my reason. But, my friend, another man will exercise his liberty as you do, by denying another doctrine which you regard as essential. A third will find fault with some other article of the Creed, and so on till the whole edifice of Christian faith crumbles to pieces. For, so closely connected are the various parts of the temple of faith, from foundation to dome, that no section can be torn down without marring the beauty and impairing the strength of the sacred structure.

St. James, the Apostle, says "Whoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one thing, is guilty of all," for the observance of the others will not avail him unto salvation. Now God demands the homage of our intellect as well as of our will, and as we displease the God of holiness by keeping all the law but offending in one point, so we displease the God of truth by accepting all the truths of revelation but rejecting one.

Where now shall we find this unity and fulness of faith so earnestly insisted on as essential by Christ and His Apostles? I answer confidently, nowhere save in the Catholic Church.

The number of Catholics in the world is estimated at nearly three hundred millions. They have all "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," one creed. They receive the same Sacraments, they worship at the same altar, they pay spiritual allegiance to the same head. Should a Catholic be so unfortunate as to contumaciously deny a single article of faith, or to withdraw from the communion of his legitimate pastors, he ceases to be a member of the Church, and is cast off like a withered branch. The Church had rather sever her right arm than suffer the virus of doctrinal error to in-

fect her members. She says to her children: You may prefer one system of civil government to another, you may espouse any political party of your choice. With this I have no concern; for "my kingdom is not of this world." But as soon as you trench on matters of faith, she cries out: Hitherto thou shalt come, and no further, and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves of discord. The temple of faith is the asylum of peace, concord and unity.

How sublime and consoling is the thought that whithersoever a Catholic goes the world over, whether he enters his church in Sydney, or Manila, in London, Vienna or Rome, in San Francisco or New York, he is sure to hear the self-same doctrine preached, to assist at the same sacrifice, and to partake of the same Sacraments.

Not only is the Catholic Church one in faith today, but her creed is now identical with what it was in Apostolic times. The same Gospel of peace that Jesus Christ preached on the Mount, the same doctrine that St. Peter preached at Antioch and Rome, St. Paul at Ephesus and Corinth, St. John Chrysostom in Constantinople, St. Ambrose in Milan, St. Basil in Caesarea, St. Remigius in France, St. Boniface in Germany, St. Athanasius in Alexandria; the same doctrine that St. Patrick introduced into Ireland, St. Augustine into England, St. Palladius into Scotland, which King Olave brought into Norway and Columbus brought to these shores—this same doctrine is ever preached in the Catholic Church throughout the world, from January to December—"Jesus Christ yesterday and today and the same forever."

A new decree of faith which the Church formulates and promulgates from time to time, does not imply a fresh doctrine superadded to her creed,

but rather emphasizes and vindicates an old dogma, because it happened to be called in question. The new decree develops and brings into bolder light a truth that was implicitly contained in the deposit of revelation.

The same admirable harmony existing in matters of faith is also manifest in the administration of the Church. All the members of the body of Catholic Christians throughout the world, are as intimately united to one visible chief as the members of the human body are connected with the head. The faithful of each parish are subject to their respective pastors. Each pastor is subordinate to his bishop, and each bishop ofChristendom bows to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, the Head of the Catholic Church. A single illustration will exhibit in a clear light the close and inseparable bond of union that exists among the Catholic hierarchy.

The Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, presided over by Pius IX., was convened in Rome in 1869. I had the privilege of attending that Council, and was its youngest bishop. Nearly eight hundred bishops attended the opening session, several others being unavoidably absent. All portions of the habitable globe were represented at the Council. The bishops were gathered from Great Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal, and almost every other part of Europe. They were assembled from the United States, Canada, Mexico and South America, and from the islands of the Atlantic and the Pacific. They met from different parts of Africa and Oceania. They came from the banks of Tigris and Euphrates, the cradle of the human family, and from the country of the Jordan, the cradle of Christianity. They traveled

to Rome from Mossul, near ancient Nineve, and from Bagdad, built near the ruins of Babylon. They journeyed from Damascus, and Mount Libanus, and from the Holy Land, sanctified by the footprints of our Blessed Redeemer.

Those prelates belonged to every form of government, from a free republic to the most absolute monarchy, a fact which plainly shows that the Catholic Church can adapt herself to every system of government. They spoke every civilized language known to men. Assembled together in the same Council Hall, well could they exclaim, in the words of St. John: "Thou hast redeemed us (O Lord) to God in Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and Thou hast made us a kingdom of priests to our God."

God grant that the day may be hastened when ancient prejudices will disappear, when our separated brethren will hearken to the voice of the Good Shepherd, when they will be reunited in the faith of their fathers, and will participate in the fulness of our Christian heritage, when "there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

PATRONAGE OF ST. JOSEPH.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF THE WORLD'S BENEFACTORS.

LUKE III., 21-23.

OF the thousands of people who, in one way or another, have conferred signal blessings on the human race, how few there are whose names have been transmitted to posterity!

The world today is full of mechanical contrivances which lighten the burden of labor and produce an infinite number of implements and commodities for the needs and comforts of man in every department of human activity. Who were the real inventors of those machines? Whose were the brains that pointed out the first step in the path of knowledge? They were men of inventive genius who often lived in garrets. They toiled and struggled secretly for years; but being too poor to prosecute their researches and bring their work to public notice, they were obliged to sell their inventions for a mere pittance to men of means and influence, who obtained a patent, and strutted in borrowed plumage, and enjoyed wealth and glory to which they were not entitled.

There are, indeed, a few inventors whose names have come down to us, but their number is insignificant compared with the host of others who have perished from memory as though they had never been born.

Passing from the mechanical to the moral and religious world, how many immortal writings, of

whose authors we are ignorant, enlighten and comfort us? We cannot tell who wrote the third and fourth Books of Kings,[1] the Book of Job, and the Book of Wisdom.

For three thousand years the Psalms have been the delight and consolation of religious souls. They form the most precious collection of inspired hymns of prayer and praise that were ever presented to the throne of grace. The Psalter is pre-eminently the prayer-book of the priests of the Church of God. For an hour and more each day their voices resound throughout the world with the recitation of these sacred songs. Several of the Psalms were written by David, but the authors of the others are left to conjecture.

We are also in more or less doubt as to the authorship of that almost inspired volume, *The Imitation of Christ.* The book is indeed commonly ascribed to Thomas à Kempis, but many grave critics dispute this claim, and attribute the work to some other writer. The author (whoever he was) seems to apply to himself these words of the *Imitation*: "If thou wouldst know and learn anything to the purpose, love to be unknown and to be esteemed as nothing."

You are all familiar with that glorious anthem of thanksgiving, the *Te Deum,* which is chanted throughout the Christian world. You listen with renewed religious emotion to the plaintive notes of the *Dies Irae,* and the *Stabat Mater.* How sweet and tender, how inspiring are the words of the hymns, *Veni Sancte Spiritus,* and *Veni Creator Spiritus!* Every expression pierces the devout soul with an arrow of divine love. We know not with any degree of certainty who were the authors of these beautiful hymns.

[1] In the Protestant version the First and Second Books.

No one can fail to admire the Liturgy of the Church, particularly the Collects of the Missal, and the prayers used in the ordination of priests and the consecration of bishops. There is a simplicity, a directness and an unction in these prayers that delight the reader and hold him captive. The invocations from the *tonsure* to the *priesthood* rise before us like a gorgeous temple, increasing in grandeur and majesty as we proceed, step by step, till the edifice is crowned in the *consecration* of a *bishop.*

I have ordained in my day about fourteen hundred priests, and have consecrated sixteen bishops, and I am tolerably familiar with the text of the Pontifical, and yet I never recite these prayers without discovering in them fresh charms and new incentives to devotion.

The authors of these matchless pages are hidden from the world, just as they wished to be. It is related of St. Thomas of Aquin that when he was once absorbed in prayer a Divine voice thus spoke to him: "Thomas, thou hast written well of Me; what recompense dost thou desire?" "No other than Thyself, O Lord," replied St. Thomas.

Such were the sentiments of the writers of our Liturgy. They were so much engrossed in heavenly contemplation that they set at nought human applause. They took care that the fragrance of their pious deeds should not waste their sweetness on the desert air of the world, but should ascend as incense to the throne of God.

Again, we praise those fathers and doctors, prelates and canonized saints of the Church, whose names are enshrined on the pages of history, who have illumined the world by their eloquence, and adorned it by their virtues. But we know little or nothing of the learned and holy men and wo-

men who taught these doctors and saints in the recesses of the cloister, or in the sanctuary of their homes.

What do we know of that grand army of pious Christian mothers without whose teaching and example their sons might never have been honored on our altars? "Their lives were hidden with Christ in God." Again, how little we know of Saint Joseph, whom the Church honors today! His eulogy in the Gospel is restricted to these few words: "He was a just man."

The moral lesson I wish you to draw from these reflections is this, that you should avoid all ostentation and display in your works of religion and benevolence. Our blessed Lord inculcates this important counsel both by precept and example.

In His Sermon on the Mount He speaks of our relations to our neighbor, to God and to ourselves, and in this triple relation He cautions us against seeking the applause of men.

"Take heed," He says, "that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them, otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in Heaven. Therefore when thou doest an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen, I say to you; they have received their reward. But thou, when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee," yea, and will repay thee "openly" as the Greek text expresses it.

"And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Amen, I say to you: they have

received their reward. But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee."

"And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you: they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who is in secret will reward thee openly."

But perhaps this objection will occur to my hearers. You may say to me: Does not our Lord in the same sermon on the Mount give this exhortation: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven?" How can I let my light shine before men, and at the same time perform my good works in secret? Does not one of those precepts contradict the other? Our Savior knew well that in view of our intimate social relations with our fellow-beings, it is impossible for us to conceal all our good deeds from public observation. Moreover, there are some acts of religion and benevolence that we are obliged to do openly. The meaning, then, of our Lord's exhortation is this: We should always shun ostentation and parade in our duties of prayer, charity and self-denial; and when we are called upon to perform any good work in public, it should be done, not from vain-glory, but for the honor of our heavenly Father, and the edification of our neighbor.

During His mortal life, Jesus Christ practised what He preached. He never made any vain display of His divine attributes, or of His merciful

deeds. Only once did He uplift the veil and disclose His glorified body to human eyes. He was transfigured on Mount Thabor, when His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as snow. And this revelation of Himself was made in the presence of only three of his disciples. And even them He charged to "tell the vision to no man till the Son of man be risen from the dead."

When He multiplied the loaves and fishes in the desert, the grateful crowd would have seized Him by force and made Him King, but He fled alone into the mountain.

After He had restored to sight the two blind men and cleansed a leper, He told them, nay, He strictly enjoined them, to tell no man the name of their Benefactor. But the more urgently He charged them to be silent, the more loudly they proclaimed His praise. Does it not often happen in life, that the more earnestly modest men fly from human observation and applause, the more eagerly it pursues them, and none are the objects of more sincere admiration than they who try to escape it?

But some one may say to me: I relish the applause of my fellow-citizens. My heart swells when I hear their voices resound with my praise. I have an unconquerable desire to hand down my name to posterity. Is not this a natural and praiseworthy ambition? Has not this love of fame impelled the soldier to perform heroic deeds on the battle-field and inspired the statesman with sublime flights of eloquence in the halls of legislation? If you take away this spring of action you paralyze the energies of the soul and stifle the most generous impulses of the human heart.

I admit, indeed, my Brethren, that a love of glory is a natural sentiment. It is inborn in us,

and without it no man can aspire to noble and magnanimous deeds.

But there are two kinds of glory—human and divine. Now which gives the stronger motive for action, the praise of man or the praise of God?

What advantage do you derive from human applause? You gain the esteem of an insignificant fraction of your fellow-beings. The rest of mankind is ignorant of your existence, or quite indifferent about you. And the pleasure you derive from the praise of men is often marred and embittered by the jealousy that it excites in the hearts of others.

How long will this praise last? It vanishes like a fleeting cloud. It continues for a few brief days, and then growing fainter and fainter, it dies away.

The builders of the Tower of Babel were filled with a sense of human glory. They said: "Let us make a tower, the top whereof may reach to heaven, and let us make our name famous before we are scattered abroad." But the tower was never finished, and the names of the projectors have not come down to us.

But even supposing that a man had succeeded in having his name perpetuated in monuments of bronze and marble, if he had sacrificed his soul and his eternal interests for earthly fame, what comfort would it be to him to be praised on earth, if he were tormented in Hell? He does not hear the praise, but he feels the torture. Oh, how terrible are the words of Augustin applied to the slaves of human glory: "*Laudantur ubi non sunt, cruciantur ubi sunt,*" "They are praised where they are not, they are tortured where they are."

On the other hand, if you do your good works without ostentation, for God's honor and your neighbor's welfare, contemplate the substantial

blessings that await you. You enjoy the testimony of a good conscience, which is far more sweet and consoling than the incense of earthly praise.

You will be honored by God Himself "who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then every man shall have praise from God."

He will praise you not secretly but openly, as our Lord Himself declares. He will proclaim your merit before angels and saints and the whole court of Heaven. Try now to picture to yourself the splendor of your glory and the fulness of your reward.

The Almighty Father Himself will be your Eulogist. The city of God, the new Jerusalem, will be the theatre of His encomium. The citizens of Heaven will be the audience and spectators. A heavenly kingdom will be your recompense. An eternity will be the duration of your glory. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

O, my brethren, write not your good deeds on the sands of time, but inscribe them in the imperishable Book of life. Commit them not to the treacherous memory of man, but confide them to the remembrance of God, by whom no good work of yours will ever be forgotten. He will say to you: "I will be your protector, and your reward exceeding great."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

PRAYER, SOURCE OF LIGHT, COMFORT AND STRENGTH.

JAMES I., 17-21.

SOME years ago I was requested by a lady in Richmond to call on her husband, who was suffering from a fatal malady, while his mind retained its vigor. This gentleman had been brought up in the school of Voltaire and his followers, whose infidel teachings he had imbibed, and he avowed himself not only an unbeliever in the Catholic faith, but even a sceptic in all revealed religion.

In my conference with him I endeavored by every argument at my command to remove his objections against Christianity, and to prepare him for a rational acceptance of our holy religion.

After listening to me with great patience and close attention, he courteously but frankly informed me that my remarks did not alter his views on religion, that between him and me there was an impassable gulf which no reasoning of mine could bridge over.

Though mortified and discourged by his candid reply, I did not despair, but resumed the conversation, substantially as follows: You certainly acknowledge, as an intelligent man, I said, the existence of a Supreme Being, the Author of all creation and of all life. Every man, he replied, that uses his brains must concede that truth. You must further admit, I continued, that as this Author of our being is omniscient, he knows our con-

dition; as He is omnipotent, He has power to succor us, and as He is infinitely good, He is not insensible to our wants. He, from whom all paternity is derived, must possess in an eminent degree, those paternal feelings that an earthly father has for his child. That truth, he replied, irresistibly follows from our conception of a Being infinitely intelligent, powerful and beneficent. Is it not reasonable to suppose, I added, that a Creator so benevolent will be moved by our entreaties, and that He will mercifully hearken to our petitions? I cannot deny, he said, the reasonableness of your conclusion.

Then, I observed, you admit the utility of prayer, and I ask you to promise me to offer up to this Supreme Providence this short petition: O God, give me light to see the truth, and strength to follow it. He gave me the earnest assurance that he would repeat this prayer day by day as long as he had strength.

Some days later I received a pressing message from my invalid friend to visit him again as soon as possible. I did so, and on entering his room I was deeply impressed with the glow of enthusiasm that shone on his face. Before I had time to address him he burst forth into an eloquent profession of faith in the divinity of the Catholic religion, and begged to receive the grace of Baptism in the presence of his old friends and associates, some of whom had shared in his unbelief. He died some weeks afterwards, fortified by the consolations of religion.

From the depth of his spiritual darkness he had implored light from "the Father of Lights," and the Lord darted into his soul a ray of heavenly light that illumined his mind and tranquillized his heart more effectually than any hu-

man reasoning could have accomplished. He saw, and he believed.

Humble and earnest prayer (for this is the only sort of prayer worth considering) is a source of light to the mind, of comfort to the heart, and of strength to the will. By prayer we ascend like Moses to the holy mountain. There God removes the scales from our eyes. He dispels the clouds of passion, of prejudice, or of ignorance that enveloped us. He enlarges our mental vision. He sheds a flood of light upon us that enables us to see things as they really are. Standing on that mountain, we see the shortness of time, and how it passes like a shadow, and we see the immeasurable length of eternity. We are penetrated with a sense of the greatness of God alone, and the littleness of man, or if we perceive anything attractive in him, it is because he is shining with borrowed light. We observe how paltry and trifling are all things earthly, since they are passing away, and like the beloved John, we get a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem. Outside of prayer, indeed, we acknowledge these truths; but it is only in prayer that we fully realize them and relish them, and that the words of the Apostle are brought home to us: "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come."

It was while St. Paul was in an ecstacy of prayer that God revealed to him the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, and gave him an insight into the glory to come "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man is able to conceive." "I know a man," he says, "in Christ, above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, such a one (was) caught up to the third heaven, was rapt into Para-

dise, and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter."[1]

St. Thomas Aquinas was one of the most eminent scholars that Christianity had produced in nineteen centuries. His vast mind ranges over the entire field of theology and philosophy. His works are an inexhaustible storehouse for statesmen and divines. Being asked one day what was his favorite book, Saint Thomas replied that he acquired more knowledge by meditating at the foot of the cross than from any other source.

While we need not expect that God will reveal to us in prayer, as He did to Saint Paul and Saint Thomas, the mysteries of His kingdom, He will enlighten us on a subject far more useful and profitable to us. He will send His search-light into the secret recesses of our soul, and will disclose to us our hidden sins and transgressions, our imperfections and shortcomings, our vanities and illusions. He "will search Jerusalem with lamps," as He said by His Prophet, He will make His lamps to shine within the temple of our hearts, and lay bare before us the dust of smaller vices which had accumulated there unobserved for months, aye, for years. He will give us knowledge, the most practical and the most essential, the knowledge of ourselves.

Prayer is a source of comfort to our hearts. It is a sovereign remedy against dejection of spirits: "Is anyone sad among you, let him pray," says the Apostle.[2]

How can we, as children, approach our heavenly Father, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, without feeling a sense of security and confidence! How can we draw near to Jesus Christ, the Sun of Justice, without experiencing

[1] II. Cor. xii., 2-4. [2] James v., 13.

the warmth of His heavenly rays! How can we fervently pray to the Holy Spirit, who is called the Paraclete or Comforter, without having our hearts dilated and enlarged? Does not the Church thus address the Holy Ghost in the hymn for Pentecost: "*Consolator optime, dulcis hospes animae, dulce refrigerium,*" "O greatest Consoler, sweet Guest of the soul, delicious refreshment to our wearied spirits."

What is the chief cause of our unrest? Is it not our excessive anxiety about our temporal affairs? Now in prayer, God gives us grace not only to restrain our inordinate ambition, but even to curb and moderate our laudable desires. Those earthly things that we so eagerly crave, appear small and trifling when weighed in the scales of the sanctuary, and the sufferings we endure seem short and momentary when measured by the standard of eternity.

We are told in the Gospel that while Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemani, "there appeared to Him an angel strengthening Him." What a striking symbol was this heavenly messenger to the angel of consolation whom the Lord sends to us in prayer to sweeten the bitter chalice which He puts to our lips!

In communion with God, our will is endowed with fresh energy and our heart is strengthened to bear the adversities of life. The man of prayer can say with the Apostle: "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." When our Savior was arrested in the Garden, the Apostles showed themselves to be weak, cowardly, vacillating men. Their leader swore that he knew not Christ. They all fled when their Master was in the hands of His enemies. But after they had spent ten days together in prayer in the upper room, they were

clothed with superhuman courage. They boldly proclaimed themselves the disciples of Him whom they had abandoned a few days before; they cheerfully submitted to be thrown into prison, and they went "from the presence of the Council, rejoicing to be accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." What a striking evidence is this of the influence of prayer!

It was after fervent prayer, accompanied with bodily mortification, that Judith, a young widow, was inspired to undertake the hazardous and successful mission of entering unattended the camp of Holofernes, and rescuing the children of Israel from the bondage and death which threatened them. It was after prayer and fasting that Queen Esther, at the risk of her life, saved the Jewish people from the sentence of death that had been pronounced against them by King Assuerus.

Where will you find in the pages of the Old Testament a more noble and heroic character than King David, who, when a mere boy, had the courage to confront and kill a lion and a bear, who when still a youth of about twenty-three years slew the giant Goliath — David, of whom the daughters of Israel sang: "Saul slew his thousands and David his ten thousands," and who crowned his victories by crushing in his heart all feeling of resentment towards Saul, his unrelenting enemy? What was the source of David's superhuman strength and courage? The secret of his power was found in prayer. "Seven times a day," he tells us, "I gave praise to the Lord." Surely if David found time to pray so often amid the cares of his kingdom, we can find leisure to raise our hearts to God from time to time in the course of the day. Never did David engage in war without invoking the God of battles, for he

knew well that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Never did he conquer an enemy without ascribing the victory to the Lord of hosts: "Blessed be the Lord, my God," he says, "who teacheth my hand to fight and my fingers to war." The Psalms which he wrote are the most sublime models of prayer and praise. For three thousand years, wherever the true God has been worshiped, they have been the delight and consolation of devout and afflicted spirits.

And lastly, reflect on the infinite dignity of the Lord to whom you pray, and the facility with which you can approach Him. If you wish to have an audience of a distinguished sovereign — the King of England, for instance — how many preliminaries have to be attended to before your desires are accomplished? You must be provided with a court dress. You must be furnished with letters of introduction bearing testimony of your honorable character. You will have to wait in an antechamber in a state of trepidation, or ill at ease until his Majesty signifies his good pleasure to receive you. And when you are permitted to speak, you will make strenuous efforts to clothe your thoughts in elegant and well-chosen language. You treasure up in your memory the empty phrases that fell from the lips of royalty, with as much care as a miser would hoard his wealth.

But in order to be favored with an interview with the King of kings, you are not required to put on a court dress. The garment your heavenly Father desires you to wear when you appear before Him, is the white robe of innocence, or the purple robe of a penitential spirit. The ornaments that please Him are the jewels of faith, humility and love. These sparkle in the light of

the Sun of Justice. These delight the sovereign Majesty, for "all the beauty of the King's daughter is within."

You are not obliged to have a friend to present you at court, for no one knows you better than your Creator. He who fashioned you knows the clay of which you are made. He reads into the depths of your heart.

You are not compelled to wait for an audience. Your heavenly Father never nods or sleeps. He is never preoccupied or engaged. He is always at home and ready to receive you. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears are open to their prayers." You may speak to Him in church and out of church, at home and abroad, by day and by night.

And when you enter into the presence of the Most High, you are not required to express your petitions in choice language and well-sounding phrases. Those so-called eloquent prayers of which we sometimes read in the papers, I fear do not go further than their author intended them to reach. They tickle the ears of men, but do not pierce the clouds. The prayer that moves our heavenly Father is that which spontaneously flows from the heart, such as the prayer of the Publican when he exclaimed: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner;" or the prayer of David: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy."

To sum up: Prayer is the noblest and most sublime act in which man can be engaged, because it exercises the highest faculties of the soul, the intellect and the will. It brings us in communication with the greatest of beings—God Himself. It is the channel of Heaven's choicest blessings. It is the mystical ladder which Jacob saw, reaching from earth to heaven, and angels ascending

with our petitions and descending with heavenly gifts. It gives us access to our heavenly Father at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. In a word, prayer renders us co-operators with our Creator in the moral government of the world, since many of the events of life are shaped by our entreaties. The affairs of mankind are decreed from all eternity, and the eternal decrees themselves are determind by the prayers of His servants. "Prayer moves the hand that moves the universe."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

WHY THE WORD OF GOD IS UNPROFITABLE TO MANY HEARERS.

JAMES I., 22-27.

WHEN Christ appeared on Mount Thabor the voice of the eternal Father was heard uttering these words: "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." Whenever you come to church to hear the word of God, consider that the Almighty addresses to you these same words: "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." Peter and Paul may speak to you; they are uttering not their own sentiments, but are communicating to you the words of Christ.

You are all aware how fruitful was the preaching of the Apostles two thousand years ago. You know that after one sermon of St. Peter, three thousand souls were added to the disciples of Christ. Why are conversions and moral reformations not so numerous now as they were then? The fault is not with the seed of the Gospel; it is as prolific now as it was in the primitive Church. The fault is with the hearers.

I propose this morning to set before you some of the causes that are an obstacle to the growth of faith and piety in our hearts. Let each one consider in himself how far these causes interfere with his advancement in righteousness, and let him courageously remove the impediment, so that the Holy Spirit may have free access to his soul.

First—The first obstacle to the salutary influence of a sermon may arise from an unconscious prejudice against the preacher himself. He may be regarded as ungainly in manner; he may be criticised for hesitancy or slowness of speech, or he may be despised because of his youth and inexperience; or what is worse, his sacred character may be overlooked in his humble exterior.

The critic may be tempted to say what Goliath said to David: How can this young man, with his sling and pebble, presume to overthrow me, who am a giant in intellect? How can this youth, with the infirmities of our common nature, hope to reclaim me from the error of my ways?

In fact, Christ Himself did not escape the shafts of adverse criticism. He was despised by some of His hearers on account of His lowly origin and avocation, and because He was not regarded as a man of letters. "Is not this the carpenter," they said, "the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joseph?" And if the Master was scorned, we need not be surprised that St. Paul was treated with contempt. Some of the Corinthians said of him that he was diminutive in stature, and contemptible in speech.

Your first duty, then, when you come to hear the word of God, is to put yourself in touch with the speaker, and to be in harmony and sympathy with him, and to regard him as he really is—the minister of Christ and the dispenser of the mysteries of God.

The Lord is pleased to make use of us as His instruments, notwithstanding our personal infirmities, or rather because of them: "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world hath God chosen to confound the strong, and the base

things of the world, and the things which are despised hath God chosen, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are; that no flesh may glory in His sight."

Provided the wine is good, you should not care whether it is presented to you in a golden or a pewter goblet. If your tea or coffee is palatable, you will not criticise the cup which contains it. The hungry pilgrim gratefully receives the food offered, whether presented by a coarse or a refined hand. The Holy Scripture tells us that the Prophet Elias was nourished in the desert with food by an angel. And Church history informs us that St. Paul, the first hermit, was fed by a raven in the wilderness in Egypt. Now, though there is an immense distance between an angel and a bird, the bread that the raven supplied to Paul was as nutritious as the food that the angel served to Elias. The food of the word of God is as nutritive to your soul when furnished by the humblest of God's servants, as if it were offered by an angel. Hence St. Paul praised the Galatians because they received the Gospel he preached to them with as much reverence as if it had been announced by an angel from Heaven.

When the Queen of Sheba brought from the Far East large presents of gold and precious stones to Solomon, the King, on accepting those rich treasures, did not find fault with the ungainly camels that carried them, or the harness in which they were caparisoned.

Now, my brethren, the words of Christ are your treasure—far more precious than gold or silver or precious stones; we are but the pack-horses that carry it to you. "We bear this treasure in earthen vessels." Christ the Lord is the living fountain of grace; He is the delicious wine that

cheers your hearts. We are but the channels by which it is conveyed to your souls.

He is "the Bread of life that cometh down from Heaven." We are the ministers that serve the food to you. He is the Shepherd of your souls. We are but the pipe that He uses to call His sheep together. Our words sounding in the pulpit are but the feeble echo of the voice of the Spirit of God that purified the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.

Fifty years ago Chief Justice Taney was a regular and devout worshiper in this Cathedral. One of the clergy of the Archbishop's household told me that he always felt a certain embarrassment in preaching before the great jurist. One day he disclosed to the Judge himself his sense of trepidation in observing him among the hearers. The Jurist replied: "I always listen to the Lord's anointed with attention and reverence. I regard all sermons as good when Christ is extolled and virtue praised. Indeed, I never heard a bad sermon in my life." This is an example worthy of imitation.

Second.—To proceed: There are many found in our days who regularly attend the House of God who listen with attention and reverence, and sometimes even with a sensible, holy joy to the sacred truths that are announced. They admit that the solemn declarations of Christ's ambassador regarding their soul's salvation, are strictly true, and cannot be denied, and under the influence of these convictions they occasionally make some efforts to conform their lives to the standard of the Gospel.

But unfortunately the words they had heard did not take deep root in their hearts. The seed of the Gospel was choked by "the cares and riches and pleasures of life." The evil Spirit, the

Father of lies, is on the alert, ready to seize the first opportunity to snatch, like a bird of prey, the newly-planted seed from the souls of his victims. He insinuates to them that the exhortation they heard is applicable only to monks and nuns and persons of advanced life, that it is yet too soon for them to renounce the pleasures of sin, that they must enjoy life for some time longer, that they must pluck some more flowers from the garden of sensual delights, that they must sow their wild oats like other men, and that later on they will have ample leisure for repentance and moral reformation. Yes, while you are young and vigorous, suck the orange, and throw the rind to God in your old age.

The Apostle St. James in the Epistle of to-day, describes by an admirable comparison those persons who do not profit by the sermons they hear. "Be ye doers of the Word," he says, "and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves; for if a man be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like to a man beholding his natural countenance in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and presently forgetteth what manner of man he was."

Are there not some of you present to whom these words of the Apostle can justly apply? Do you not admit that the description which the Apostle gives of the sinner exactly fits yourselves? Do you not acknowledge that the picture is well drawn, that every sentence is a stroke portraying some feature in your character? And yet you have not the courage or the resolution to remove the deformity he points out in your conscience, nor to wash away with the waters of penance the stains from your soul.

Now can you imagine, my brethren, that God will be satisfied on finding that, after having heard so many exhortations, you manifest as yet so slight a moral improvement; that, after so much seed is sown in your hearts, He discovers so little fruit of sanctification; that, after so much grace is lavished on you, there is so small progress in your spiritual life? For, remember that every sermon you hear is a special grace, and that every grace abused is a crime. God will not be content with so scanty a harvest, for He declares to us by the Prophet Isaiah, that His word shall not return to Him void, but as the rain bringeth forth seed to the sower, so shall His word bring forth fruit in our hearts. And by the Prophet Ezechiel He says to His minister: "If thou give warning to the wicked, and he be not converted from his wickedness and his evil ways, he indeed shall die in his iniquity, but thou shalt save thy soul."

What would be the feelings of a farmer on seeing that a field, which he had cultivated with the greatest care, had enriched with fertilizers, and in which he had planted excellent seed, had brought forth nothing but weeds, thorns and briers? Would he not be tempted to curse that field, as our Lord cursed the barren fig-tree, saying: "Let no fruit grow upon thee forever." What did our Lord mean when He struck with blight the fruitless tree? Surely He was not angry with the barren trunk. He intended, no doubt, to convey to men a forcible lesson of the terrible consequences that follow from hearing the word of God without fruit.

St. Paul inculcates the same lesson under a like figure: "The earth," he says, "that drinketh in the rain which often falls upon it, and bringeth

forth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto a curse, whose end is to be burned." How bountiful has the Divine Husbandman been in planting in the field of your hearts the seed of His word, which He has copiously watered with the rains and dews of His grace! Oh, if you had cultivated that field with diligence, how abundant now would be your harvest of Christian perfection! And if the condition of those persons who have not the courage to amend their lives is to be deplored, how much more wretched is the state of those who are so blind that they will not see their iniquity! These men look upon themselves as immaculate and exempt from human frailty, and they have not the humility to persuade themselves that the denunciations of God's minister can in any manner apply to themselves. These persons are usually exercising their mind during the sermon in trying to designate those to whom the censures of the priest may be referred. While the speaker is reproving in general those who are guilty of certain vices, without having anyone particularly in view, these self-righteous critics will thus commune with themselves: That blow was intended for my neighbor on my right; this stroke was aimed at my friend on the opposite side; that other reproof was levelled at the individual in front of me, and richly he deserves it. And thus they go on from the beginning to the end of the discourse without ever searching their own hearts.

Now, my brethren, this is unjust and uncharitable. It is imitating the hypocrisy of the Pharisee, who stalks with uplifted head into the temple, and thanks God that he is "not like the rest of men, extortioners. unjust, adulterers, as this Publican."

Never apply to anyone except yourself the strictures from the pulpit. If happily you are innocent of the sin that is condemned, humbly thank your Maker. But if there is any shadow of guilt on your conscience, point your finger to your own breast, and say what the Prophet Nathan said to David: "Thou art the man." Thou, my soul, art guilty of this offence. Thou must amend thy life.

Third.—St. Chrysostom complained in his day that many persons came to the temple of God, to criticise the sermon, to applaud or condemn it, instead of listening to it with the reverence of a disciple. That class of hearers, alas! is not yet extinct.

Some enter the Church of God as they would walk into a theatre, and listen to the sermon of a priest as they would hear the declamations of an actor on the stage. If the preacher tickles their ears, excites their imagination, or indulges their humor, they express themselves as highly entertained. But if, on the contrary, he tells them some wholesome but unpalatable truths, if he puts them in mind of their faults with the view to correcting them, they grow uneasy and chafe under the ordeal, and they say in their hearts what Achab said of Micheas: "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good to me, but evil."

The impious king Achab, before engaging in war with Syria, consulted four hundred false prophets about the issue of the campaign. They gave him the flattering answer that he would certainly be victorious. But the pious king Josaphat, the ally of Achab, convinced of the hypocrisy of the false prophets, asked: "Is there not some prophet of the Lord to be consulted?" Achab replied: "There is one man named Micheas, but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good to me,

but evil." Micheas was summoned. He foretold the destruction of Achab's army. The prophecy was fulfilled. The army was dispersed, and Achab was slain.

There are hundreds of false prophets in the world who are eager to deceive you by fallacious hopes. But there is one spot that should be free from the taint of sycophancy. From this sacred pulpit God's anointed minister must ever hold up to you the mirror of truth, without fear or favor, for "Better are the wounds of a friend than the deceitful kisses of an enemy."

That sermon, my brethren, is the most profitable; indeed, that sermon is alone worthy of the name which enlightens our minds and warms our hearts on spiritual things, which arouses in us a love of God and of our neighbor, and which inspires us with a hatred and contempt of ourselves. King Louis XIV. of France had listened to a great many discourses from courtier prelates. But there was one man, Massillon, Bishop of Clermont, who always spoke to the King with the freedom and authority with which Nathan spoke to David. One day Louis remarked: "When I hear some other preacher, I am pleased with the speaker; but when I listen to Massillon I am displeased with myself."

It is a fearful thing to receive the grace of God in vain. According to the testimony of Christ Himself, it is a sign of reprobation to have a distaste or aversion for the word of God. He said to the Jews: "Ye hear not the word of God because ye are not of God." And God makes this threat by the mouth of His Prophet: "I called, and you refused; I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all My counsel, and have neglected My reprehen-

sions. I also will laugh at your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you fear."

On the other hand, it is a mark of Divine predilection and predestination to have a relish for the word of God. "He that is of God," says our Savior, "heareth the words of God." It is a sign of good bodily health to have a keen appetite for nourishment, and it is the sign of a healthy soul to have a taste for spiritual food. If we have a yearning for our heavenly country we shall be glad when it is mentioned before us and when the way to reach it is pointed out.

Oh, that the Holy Spirit would burn my lips with His sacred fire as He burned the mouth of Isaiah with a burning coal, that I might brand on your hearts the saving Gospel of Christ! Would to God that the Lord would inspire me so to speak, and inspire you so to hear, that you should all be filled with the compunction of the multitude that listened to John the Baptist in the desert, and cry out with them: "What shall I do to be saved?"

May the precepts of the Gospel exert so sweet, so strong, so sovereign a sway over your minds and hearts that the parting words of Christ, tenderly spoken to His Apostles, may be fulfilled in you: "If any man love Me, he will hear My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come and will make our abode with him." May the word of Christ, reigning in the kingdom of your souls, be a pledge and an earnest that He will reign over you in the kingdom of His glory.

ASCENSION DAY.

ETERNAL HAPPINESS AND CONDITIONS FOR ATTAINING IT.

MARK XVI., 14-20.

THERE is only One Being that is absolutely immortal, One alone that is everlasting, that had no beginning, and will have no end — and that Being is God: "In the beginning, O Lord," says the Psalmist, "Thou didst found the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest, and all of them shall grow old like a garment; and as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art always the self-same, and Thy years shall not fail."[1] "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."[2]

Go back in spirit to the twilight of time. Contemplate the early dawn of creation, before the earth assumed its present form, when all was chaos. Even then God was in the fulness of life, and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Look forward through the vista of ages to come, when the heavens and the earth shall have passed away, even then God will live. He will survive the universal wreck of matter.

Let us now look at man. What a strange contrast is presented by his physical and spiritual nature! What a mysterious compound of cor-

[1] Ps. ci., 26-29. [2] Apoc. i., 8.

ruption, and incorruption, of ignominy and glory, of weakness and strength, of matter and mind! He has a body that must be nourished twice or thrice a day, else it will grow faint and languid. It is subject to infirmities and sickness and disease, and it must finally yield to the inevitable law of death. What are you but a vapor that rises and melts away, a shadow that suddenly vanishes! A hundred years ago you had no existence. A hundred years hence you will probably be forgotten.

Contemplate now the spiritual side of your being. In the midst of a mortal body you carry an immortal soul. In the midst of this perishable mass you have an imperishable spirit. Within this frail, tottering temple there is a light which will always burn and never be extinguished. As to the past, you are finite; as to the future, you are infinite in duration. As to the past, you are a creature of yesterday; as to the future, you are everlasting. When this house of clay shall have crumbled to dust, when this earth shall have ceased to be inhabited, when the sun shall grow dim with years, and the stars shall fade away, even then your soul will live and move and have its being; it will think, remember and love; for God breathed into you a living spirit, and that spirit, like Himself, is clothed with immortality.

The more I reflect on man's immortality, the more profoundly I am impressed with a sense, not only of his dignity, but still more of his dread responsibility; for he is destined for a life of eternal happiness or eternal misery, and his destiny is, in a measure, in his own hands. "What a man soweth, that also shall he reap. For he who soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap

corruption; but he who soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap everlasting life."[1]

When Sir Thomas More, Chancellor of England, was imprisoned in the Tower of London by Henry VIII. for refusing to take the oath acknowledging the Royal Supremacy, which would sully his conscience, he was visited by his wife, who was a worldly, temporizing woman. She thus addresses him: "I marvel much, Mr. More, that you, who have hitherto been taken for a wise man, should now so play the fool as to lie here in this close, filthy prison, shut up with rats and mice, when you might be abroad at your liberty, enjoying the favor of the king and Council. You might dwell in peace in your fair house at Chelsea, with your library, gallery and garden, and be merry in company with me, your good wife, and your children and household." "Why, good Alice," said he with a winning smile, "is not this prison as near Heaven as my own house?" "Oh tilly valley, tilly valley," she replied, with a sneer of contempt. "Nay, then, Alice," More continued, "how long, think you, one might live to enjoy this house of ours?" "Perhaps some twenty years." "Well, now, my good Alice, he were a very bad calculator that for a hundred or a thousand years would risk the loss of eternity."

I am sure that you all aspire to a life of endless happiness. Let me, therefore, give you some words of hope and encouragement in striving for the prize of eternal glory.

There are chiefly four classes of persons to whom our Lord holds out the promise of everlasting recompense.

First — He gives this assurance to those who have succeeded in leading a blameless life, or who

[1] I. Gal. vi., 8.

have sincerely atoned for their transgressions by a life of sincere repentance. In the Gospel, our Savior says: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." And the Psalmist says: "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place? The innocent in hands and the clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor." The young man in the Gospel put this question to our Redeemer: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may have life eternal?" Our Lord answered: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments." The young man replied: "All these I have kept from my youth." Is it not in your power to keep your heart from being perverted? Can you not keep your lips from being defiled? Can you not serve God with clean hands? Can you not observe the Commandments as well as the young man mentioned in the Gospel? You have certainly more helps at your disposal than he possessed, for he was a Hebrew, and was not fortified, as you are, by the grace and example of Jesus Christ.

But most of you will say to me: The way of righteousness we have not known. We have defiled our soul by sin. Well, be it so. If you can not enter Heaven by the path of innocence, thank God, you can enter it by the path of repentance. If you cannot go before your Maker clothed in the white garment of sinlessness, you can appear before Him in the purple robe of penance. If you are unworthy of imitating our blessed Savior, and His immaculate Mother, thank God you can keep company with David, the Royal Prophet, with Peter and with Magdalen. Which of you has sinned as grievously as David did?—David, who was guilty of adultery and murder, and whose

murder was of a most aggravated character, for it was committed to screen his adultery and to enable him to continue to gratify his passion without molestation from the injured husband. But if David was great in iniquity, he was still greater in repentance; if he was great in conquering others, he was still greater in conquering himself. And notwithstanding his criminal deeds, he deserved to be called in Holy Writ, "a man according to God's own heart."

If you cannot walk heavenward with the innocent John the Baptist, you can go in company with Peter. Which of you has ever offended God as Peter did?—Peter, who denied his Master with an oath, after having made so many protestations of fidelity; who denied Him after his lips were purpled with the precious Blood of his Master, which he had drunk at the Last Supper. Yet so much did Peter propitiate his Lord by his tears and repentance, that he is appointed the Prince of the Apostles and the Head of the Church.

If you are unworthy of keeping company with Mary, the Virgin, in your journey to eternity, you can be the companion of Mary, the penitent. Which of you has defiled your soul as Mary Magdalen did? And yet, next to our immaculate Mother there is no woman mentioned in the Gospel who was more favored by our Lord or is more honored in the Church than is Magdalen. If you cannot kiss the feet of Christ with chaste lips, like His Mother, you can water them with tears of compunction, like Magdalen. Oh! how precious in the sight of God is the gift of repentance, since it changes a moral leper into an elect of God!

Give us, O Lord, the heart of David, that we may cry to Thee with genuine repentance: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great

mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out mine iniquity. Wash me yet more from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins. For I know mine iniquity and my sins are always before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and have done evil before Thee, that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words and mayest overcome when Thou art judged. For behold Thou hast loved truth, the uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest to me. Thou wilt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed. Thou wilt wash me and I shall become whiter than snow. To my hearing Thou shalt give joy and gladness, and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn away Thy face from my sins and blot out mine iniquities. Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from Thy face, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and strengthen me with a perfect spirit. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit. An humble and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."[1]

Second—Another class of persons to whom our Lord holds out the promise of eternal felicity are they who have an unshaken faith in Him, and who are ready to profess that faith whenever the occasion demands it: "I am the Resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live, and every one who liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever." "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in Heaven." "If thou confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead thou shalt be saved. For

[1] Ps. L.

with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Have you not, my brethren, an unclouded belief in your risen Lord, and do you not esteem it an honor and a privilege, as well as a sacred duty, to profess that faith whenever the circumstances require it? Under this head, then, you have reason to hope, for if a grateful country rewards its champions, surely a bountiful God will not fail to recompense His faithful confessors, when their confession is associated with good deeds.

Third — Another class of Christians to whom Christ promises eternal bliss are they who are instrumental in guiding others in the path of righteousness: "They who instruct others unto justice shall shine like stars for all eternity." It is true, indeed, that you have no mission to preach the Gospel, like God's anointed priests. But as parents and guardians, have you not a mission to instruct those of your own household? "If any man," says the Apostle, "hath not care of his own, and especially those of his household, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Have you not a wider missionary field to enlighten others by the silent eloquence of your example? Does not our Lord say to each of you: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." "Having your conversation good among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak of you as evil doers, they may, by the good works which they see in you, glorify God in the day of visitation."

Fourth—But it is especially to those who exercise benevolence toward suffering humanity that God promises the reward of eternal life. It is a circumstance worthy of note that, when our Savior refers to the dread day when He shall appear in

His Majesty to judge the living and the dead, He singles out the practice of compassion to our suffering brethren as the virtue that will secure for us an eternal recompense: "Come," He will say, "ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave Me to eat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me to drink, I was a stranger and ye took Me in. Naked and ye clothed Me; sick and ye visited Me. I was in prison and ye visited Me. . . . For as long as ye did it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it to Me."

The fault with most of us is that we take a speculative view of eternal life. We live and act as if our existence closed with the grave. As Pascal says: "The present time is everything to us, and eternity is nothing to us." Each one of us should bring this matter home to himself and say: I am destined to live forever. This was the practical view that St. Paul took of the subject. What a clear, unclouded view he had of the illimitable expanse of eternity when he said: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day, and not to me only, but to them also who love His coming."

Ah! let us love our Lord's coming. Let us say with John in the Apocalypse: "Come, Lord Jesus, come, my Savior, my Lord and my God, come and take me to Thyself. I desire to be dissolved and to be with Thee." "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?"

Let us deplore our exile from the heavenly Jerusalem as deeply as the children of Israel lamented

their exile from the earthly Sion: "Upon the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Sion," and they exclaimed: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember Thee, if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy."

Let us feel that we are pilgrims, that we "have not here a lasting city, but we seek one which is to come." Let us say with the Apostle: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (of the body) be destroyed, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens." Above all, let us use this world as if we used it not, believing that "the fashion of this world passeth away." If we live up to these sentiments then we can with humble confidence say with the Apostle: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the just Judge, will give unto me."

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

THE USES OF ADVERSITY.

JOHN XV., 26; XVI, 4.

SUFFERING is a law of human life. No man can escape it, whether he be Pope or king, emperor or president. What Job said nearly three thousand five hundred years ago is as true now as it was then: "Man born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is filled with many miseries. He cometh forth like a flower and never continueth in the same state." What is the whole Scripture narrative from Adam to Christ but a record of sin, sorrow and suffering? "The days of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years, few and evil." These were the words of the Patriarch Jacob, and is not this the experience of the great mass of mankind, except that their span of life is shorter than was his?

But if tribulation is a law of human life, it is also, thank God, a law and a condition of Christian progress and perfection. It is a means ordained by Heaven for our sanctification and salvation. "Through many tribulations it behooveth us to enter the kingdom of God." "All who wish to live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The reason is obvious. To live piously is to live conscientiously. To live conscientiously is to walk in the straight path of Christian duty. And you cannot walk long in that path without confronting opposition. A great writer has said:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity, which like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

Oh, ye patient and long-suffering Christians, ye who endure adversity with heroic fortitude, you carry a precious jewel in your head unseen by men. That jewel is the bright ray of God's approving smile, transforming you to the likeness of Him who is called "the Man of Sorrows."

The teaching of Christian philosophy with regard to the uses of adversity may be summed up in one short sentence—that they are to be borne with patience and even with joy. "We glory in our tribulations," says the Apostle, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience approval, and approval hope, and hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given us."

Let me present to you now a few reasons why we should rejoice in our tribulations.

First—Nothing can happen to you without the will of God. All those temporal evils, such as physical pains and mental sorrows, whether they proceed directly from the malice of men or from what we call accidents, are ordained by the Almighty, or are permitted by Him. What we call accidents are links in the chain of our immortal destiny. For if even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father's will, surely no misfortune shall befall us without His consent.

The patriarch Joseph, whose history is recorded in the Book of Genesis, saw the hand of God in the trials which he endured. His brothers envied him because he was specially loved by their father, Jacob. They threatened to kill him, and finally compromised by selling him as a slave to merchants who were going to Egypt. Some years

after, when a famine came upon the land of Israel, the brethren of Joseph went to Egypt to buy corn, and to their amazement and alarm they were confronted in the house of Pharaoh by their exiled brother. But Joseph, far from showing any resentment, hung upon their necks with tears, and said to them: "It was not by your counsel that I was sent hither, but by the will of God, who hath made me, as it were, a father to Pharaoh, the lord of his whole house, and governor of all the land of Egypt." Joseph saw the hand of Providence making the wickedness of his brethren subordinate to God's designs upon him.

When Peter, in defense of his Master, drew his sword and struck off the ear of the servant of the High Priest, our Lord rebuked him and said: "The chalice which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" My Father is using even these vile wretches as His instruments in consummating the redemption of mankind.

Second—God sends you afflictions, not through hatred and caprice, but as a mark of His fatherly love. "My son," He says, through His inspired writer, "despise not the correction of the Lord, neither be thou wearied when thou art rebuked by Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." And the Apostle says: "To them that love God all things work together unto good."

Contemplate the life of Jesus Christ. Who could be so dear to God as His only begotten Son, who was "the figure of His substance and the splendor of His glory?" Christ was His "beloved Son in whom He was well pleased." Read the sufferings of Christ as related in the Gospel. Never before was so much physical pain and mental anguish compressed into so short a span of life as

were the afflictions endured by our Lord. Of Him the Prophet spoke when he said: "All ye who pass by the way, attend and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow." And how can we call those sufferings an evil, an essentially bad thing, since Christ endured them? And He tells us that if we are to be His disciples we must be prepared to suffer as He did: "If any one will be My disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven; for so they persecuted the prophets that were before you."

Now who is right, the world or Jesus Christ who is to judge the world, and to judge it according to the standard of the Gospel?

What men were dearer to Jesus Christ than His Apostles? They were the companions of His daily labors, they were His cherished friends, they were the depositaries of His secret counsels. "I will not call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Master doeth, but I have called you friends, for all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you." And yet who endured so much as they did? Take St. Paul as a specimen of the rest. Read his life as it is portrayed in the Acts and in the Epistles, especially in his second Epistle to the Corinthians.

"From the Jews five times I received forty stripes save one. Thrice I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a day and a night I was in the depths of the sea. In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils

from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labor and distress, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness."

Such was the life of the Prime Minister of Jesus Christ, of the friend whom He ardently loved. Such was the life of this vessel of election, of whom Christ said: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." And surely if our Lord believed that a life of honor, pleasure and riches, and of indolent luxury were better for His Apostle, He would have ordained for him a career of ease instead of hardships.

So heavy was the burden of the Apostle, so acute his temptations, that we find him in the same Epistle repeatedly imploring the Lord to remove them from him. And this is the answer he received: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity." Your weakness will be strengthened by the power of My grace. I will not remove your burden, but I will give you strength to carry it."

And then the Apostle concludes with this heroic resolution: "Gladly, therefore, will I glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." He does not say: With patience I will be resigned to my tribulations, but gladly, he says, I will glory, I will rejoice, I will exult in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Let us now measure our moral stature by that of the Apostle. Let us compare ourselves with St. Paul. When God sends us a cross we become sad and discouraged, and we lose heart. Then we go about begging the alms of compassion and condolence of our neighbors. We crave from them the crumbs of commiseration. Like the

Apostle, we pray God to lighten our burden, but unlike the Apostle, if our prayer is not granted, we repine and complain, and even upbraid our heavenly Father. We regard the continuance of the cross as a mark of abandonment and reprobation, instead of looking upon it as a sign of predilection and predestination. Let us imitate the Apostle. Let us take our medicine like men. It may be as bitter as the waters of Mara, but it will be sweetened by the wood of the Cross.

But you will say: I am not an Apostle. I have not the grace of an Apostle to suffer with patience. If you are not an Apostle, are you not a Christian and a disciple of Christ? If you are not a captain, are you not a soldier in the army of the Lord? It is not just nor reasonable that commanders should monopolize all the valor of the army. God will grant you, as He granted the Apostle, the necessary graces to bear your trials. God fits the back to the burden. "He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but He will even make issue with the temptation, that you may be able to bear it."

You will say again: I could bear any other cross but this. I could receive with composure an insult from any other man but this individual. I would like to have the selection of my penances. That is to say: You want to be patient and physician at the same time. The Lord knows best what kind of penance is good and appropriate for you. The Gospel tells us that a great multitude of sick, blind, lame and withered were gathered about the pool of Bethsaida, and whoever entered first into the pool after the moving of the waters, was cleansed from the infirmity

which he had. Our spiritual diseases are far more numerous and complex than the physical maladies of those who were lying about the pool of Bethsaida. Our heavenly Father is our physician. He plunges us, one by one, into the healing pool of tribulation for the cleansing of the disease that is special in each of us.

Perhaps our fever is pride and vain-glory. Our Lord sends us some humiliation to reduce our swelling pride and make us humble of heart. Nothing contributes better to humility than humiliations. Your fever is impatience and irritability of temper towards your family and domestics. The Lord sends you some affliction that brings you (home) to yourself and chastens you with sweet patience. Your disease is in the tongue. When we are sick in body the doctor asks us to put out our tongue. How many of us have no need to show our tongue to indicate our spiritual malady? We make men feel that we have a very sharp one. You are unkind and unjust in your conversation. You have an itching for talking about your neighbor's affairs. Your heavenly Physician cures you by allowing the tongue of calumny to pierce your heart. No one realizes the enormity of detraction more than the victim of slander.

Or perhaps you have taken a vain complacency in your personal charms, or have made a perverse and wanton use of your physical strength. God strikes you down on a bed of sickness to remind you that your bodies are not to be profaned on the altar of vanity or self-indulgence, but are to be offered as a pleasing victim to the Lord. Your fever consists in an inordinate attachment to earthly riches, and a financial crash comes which reduces you to straitened circumstances. You

are thereby admonished to accept the situation in the spirit of Job, and to say with him: "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Lastly you will say: My cross is too heavy to bear. I suffer more than any mortal has endured. In saying this you deceive yourselves. No one can compare his trials with those of others, unless their life is laid bare before him. And this revelation God does not vouchsafe to make. If we, God's ministers, were to publish to the world a diary of a clergyman after the manner of "A diary of a physician," what a tale of woe we could unfold! Some days ago a lady remarked to me: "No one can suffer as much as I do." I could have told her that the lady who had just gone out had a heavier cross to bear, and she endured it with heroic fortitude. There is an old Dutch proverb which says that if we were all to bring our crosses to the market, so that he who bore the largest and heaviest cross would receive the prize, we would be so much ashamed of the littleness of our own that we would hide it in our breast without exhibiting it.

"Once," said the Persian poet Sadi, "I murmured at the vicissitudes of fortune when my feet were bare, and I had not the means of procuring shoes. I entered a mosque with a heavy heart, and there beheld a man deprived of his feet. I offered up my praise and thanksgiving to Heaven for its bounty, and bore with patience the want of shoes."

Christians, look on the bright side, instead of the dark side of human life. God sends you ninety-nine blessings with one affliction. You close your eyes to the ninety and nine blessings, and you stare at the one affliction, until your imagination

and impatience distort and magnify it beyond all due proportions.

Above all, remember that earthly scenes are passing away and bringing us nearer to eternity; for "our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure an eternal weight of glory."

FEAST OF PENTECOST.

DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE APOSTLES.

ACTS II., 1-11.

THE Apostles, having accompanied our Divine Savior to the Mount of Olives, behold Him for the last time on earth while He ascends glorious and triumphant to the right hand of His Father in Heaven. They had been His constant companions during the three years of His public ministry. Every day they had listened to His familiar voice. They had been the depositaries of His divine secrets. They had shared in His joys and sorrows. And now that their Friend and Consoler is snatched from them, they feel like orphans deprived of the best of fathers, and like orphans sensible of their bereavement, they cling the more closely to one another.

We may easily imagine what mingled feelings of sorrow, joy and hope filled their breasts as they silently returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. They had sentiments of sorrow that their Friend and Counsellor was taken from them, and that they should never look upon His face again on earth; feelings of joy, that, though deprived of His company, they knew He was happy in Paradise and beyond the reach of sufferings; feelings of hope, as He had promised not to leave them orphans, but would send them the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to supply His place, to purify their hearts, and fit them for a happy reunion with Him in His Heavenly Kingdom.

Having reached the city of Jerusalem, the disciples with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, retire to an upper room, where they spend ten days in recollection and prayer, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. And when the ten days were accomplished, "there suddenly came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind, . . . and there appeared cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

It is important that we should dwell on the various circumstances connected with this mystery, for they are all fraught with deep significance, and are symbolic of the fruits produced in the hearts of the disciples.

The descent of the Holy Ghost was accompanied by the sound as of a mighty *wind,* to denote the powerful influence of the Spirit of God that broke down in an instant the obstinate prejudices of the Apostles, purified the atmosphere of their souls, and filled them with a Divine energy.

The Holy Ghost descended in the form of *tongues.* This was to signify that superhuman eloquence with which the Apostles were endowed and to show that the kingdom of Jesus Christ was to be established, not by the sword of conquest, but by the living voice of His disciples and the irresistible force of Divine grace which should "captivate men to the obedience of faith." These tongues were of *fire.* It is the property of fire to give light and heat. The Holy Spirit burned and consumed in the hearts of the Apostles all that was selfish and carnal, and inflamed them with the fire of Divine charity and zeal, which they were to communicate to the faithful.

We cannot form a better idea of the wonderful gifts the Holy Ghost imparted to the Apostles

than by comparing their religious and moral condition before and after the descent of the Divine Spirit. Before the day of Pentecost, the Apostles were poor, *illiterate* men, and for the most part *fishermen*. Their knowledge of the world and of men was confined within the narrow limits of the province of Judea. The greater part of their lives was spent in their boats, on the Sea of Galilee. But immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost they become wonderfully enlightened. They are endowed with the gift of tongues. The treasures of the Scriptures are unfolded to them, and they are able to expound to the people the most sublime mysteries of religion.

The city of Jerusalem is filled with strangers speaking different languages, who come from various countries to celebrate the great Jewish festival of Pentecost. Jerusalem, on that occasion, was what Rome is today on the occurrence of some great religious function. The Apostles, who before had but a rude acquaintance with their own tongue, preach the saving truths of religion to divers people in their own languages. "And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: behold, are not all these that speak Galileans; and how have we every one heard our own tongue wherein we were born?—Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Jews also and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Before the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were *timid* and *cowardly*. On the very night that their Divine Master was seized in the garden of Gethsemani, at a time that specially called for their loyalty and courage, they fled like a flock of affrighted sheep before a pack of

wolves, and left their Shepherd in the hands of His enemies. Peter himself, who had made such earnest protestations of fidelity a few hours before, quailed and trembled at the voice of a maid-servant, and even swore that he was not a disciple of Jesus.

But when they emerged from the upper chamber they were endowed with superhuman courage. The very Jews from whom they had fled, they now confront, and boldly accuse of having put to death "the Author of life." "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by signs and wonders, . . . Him ye have crucified and slain by the hands of wicked men." And when they were commanded under the most severe threats to desist from proclaiming the name of Jesus, they gave this fearless answer: "We must obey God rather than men."

Before Pentecost the Apostles were *weak in faith.* Although they had frequently witnessed the miracles of our Lord, though they had daily proofs of His divine power, still their trust in His promises was vacillating. Witness the conduct of St. Thomas. He had heard our Savior predict His resurrection, nevertheless he would not assent to the fact until he had felt with his own hands the print of the nails on the hands and the wound in the side of his Master. And when Magdalen had informed all the Apostles assembled together that she had seen her risen Lord, they were slow to believe. Our Lord Himself, after He was risen, reproached them for their infidelity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe in his Resurrection, of which He had so frequently foretold them.

But as soon as they receive the spirit of God, their faith is quickened and strengthened. They divide among themselves the Roman empire, and

preach everywhere the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and they are glad to seal their testimony with their blood.

Before the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles, notwithstanding the heavenly school in which they were taught, notwithstanding all the lessons of self-denial they had received, and the divine examples set before them, displayed many of the petty vices of *selfish men.* They were as yet more carnal than spiritual; they thought more of the loaves and fishes than of the spiritual manna. They yearned more for an earthly than a heavenly kingdom. We see these tendencies exemplified in the conduct of James and John, who through their mother petitioned our Lord that He would raise them to the highest dignity in the earthly kingdom which they thought He was to establish. And all the Apostles were at least once surprised and reproved by their Master for contending among themselves which of them should be the greatest.

But as soon as the Holy Ghost descended upon them this narrow, self-seeking spirit, this sordid ambition passed away. No longer aspiring to temporal glory and preferment, they utterly despise all terrene distinctions, and rather "rejoice in being accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Christ."

In fine, before the miracle of Pentecost, they were of a *vindictive temper,* as was shown when they asked their Master to call down lightning from heaven to consume an offending city of Samaria. They were so slothful in prayer as to elicit from our Lord this gentle reproach: "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" But after receiving the Holy Ghost, they exhibit a spirit of unalterable patience, and they relinquish other

duties that they might "give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."

The festival of today is peculiarly your festival and the festival of every devout soul, because in celebrating the feast of Pentecost you not only commemorate a past event, but you solemnize a mystery in the blessings of which you also may hope to participate. In this respect, Whit Sunday differs from the other solemnities of the year. When you commemorate our Lord's Passion and Death you recall an event that took place once, but will never occur again. When you honor His Resurrection and Ascension you call to mind a fact, the like of which will not be repeated until the consummation of the world.

But when you celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, you not only recall to mind an event which happened nineteen hundred years ago, but one which is daily and hourly renewed in the Church, and which, you may humbly hope, will be also renewed in yourselves by the indwelling of the Spirit within your souls.

It is true that when the Holy Spirit sanctifies now by His presence the hearts of the faithful, He does not manifest His coming by appearing in the form of tongues, as He did on Whit Sunday. Nor does He impart to those who receive Him the gift of tongues and other supernatural favors, as He did in the early days of Christianity. Those extraordinary graces were necessary in the infancy of the Church, to prove to the world that she was the work of God, and to strengthen the faith of the new disciples. But they are now no longer needed, as Christ's kingdom is firmly established: just as a young sapling when first planted needs to be occasionally watered until it takes deep root; but

these artificial helps are withdrawn when the tree is firmly embedded in the soil.

When Christ established His Church, it was His gracious will that it should continue not only during the Apostles' lives, or for a century, but that it should last till time shall be no more. Hence, also, it was His intention that the same sanctifying graces that were poured out on the primitive Christians should also be disseminated through the Church in every age and country, wherever His Gospel was preached. Just as this beautiful earth of ours abounds today in refreshing streams and health-giving fruits, as much as it did in the days of our primitive parents, because it was created for man's material use and benefit, even so Christ's spiritual kingdom, which was erected for the support and development of our higher life, is as replete today as it was in the days of the Apostles with the streams of heavenly grace and the fruits of sanctification.

God loves us as much as He loved the primitive Christians. Jesus Christ died for us as well as for them. The Holy Ghost is as eager to dwell in our hearts as He desired to reign in the hearts of the first-born children of the faith.

Yes, wherever a child is regenerated in the waters of Baptism, wherever the soldier of Christ is anointed in Confirmation, wherever the repentant sinner appears before his Heavenly Father, imploring pardon for his sins, there is the Holy Ghost descending, operating, cleansing and sanctifying the soul, and making it His living temple: "If any one love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come and make our abode with him."

My brethren, you would like to have some sign or test by which you can judge whether or not you possess the Spirit of God. "Beloved," says St.

John, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God." Just as we judge a tree by its fruit, so we judge a spirit by his operations. "Beware of false prophets. . . . By their fruit ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?"

The Spirit of God is not an idle Visitor, but an active Principle, continually working within us.

The Spirit of God is a Spirit of *prayer*. "The Spirit," says St. Paul, "helpeth our infirmity, for we know not what to pray for as we ought. But the Spirit Himself asketh for us with groans unutterable."[1] The Holy Spirit prays for us, and in us with an earnestness which words cannot describe. If you have the Holy Spirit within you, you will relish prayer, you will instinctively turn to God when assailed by any temptation or oppressed by any affliction, and you will be diligent in the exercise of your morning and evening devotions.

The Spirit of God is a Spirit of *Light*. "He is the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." As the children of Israel were conducted through the wilderness to the Promised Land by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so is the Christian pilgrim guided by the Holy Spirit in his life's pilgrimage to his Promised Land of Heaven. Ask Him to lead you on through the straight and narrow path of righteousness, and to guard you from the pitfalls of error and vice.

The Holy Ghost is a Spirit of *Truth*. He is often called by that title in the Gospel, while the Devil is called "the father of lies." Our Lord says, "When the Spirit of truth shall come, He will teach you all truth." "The Spirit of truth, whom

[1] Rom. viii.

the world cannot receive." If, therefore, you are animated by the Holy Spirit, you will be always truthful, open, candid, sincere and ingenuous in your speech and conduct, and you will shun lying, deceit, duplicity and all double-dealing. Above all, you will avoid calumny and detraction and injurious whisperings.

The Holy Ghost is a Spirit of *Strength.* When a man is possessed by the Spirit of God, he is animated by the heroism of the Apostle when he said: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Nothing deters or frightens him when the path of duty and conscience lies before him. He has the courage of his convictions. He is uncompromising in his loyality to religion. He is always ready to promote her interests and to defend her doctrines in the presence of her adversaries.

The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of *Sobriety* and Moderation: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury," says the Apostle, "but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

He is also a Spirit of *Mortification* and self-denial: "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the Spirit, you shall live." It is a sign that God's Spirit dwells in you if you are chaste in thought, circumspect in conduct, and clean of heart; if you restrain your imagination from wandering through forbidden fields, and curb your passions, keeping them subject to the law of the Gospel.

The Holy Ghost is, above all, a Spirit of *Love.* "The charity of God," says the Apostle, "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who

is given to us." Ask Him to burn and consume in your hearts the dross of sin, so that you may love God above all things, and your neighbor as yourselves.

In the sequence of today's Mass, we thus address the Holy Spirit: "Consolator optime, dulcis Hospes animae, dulce Refrigerium—O best of Consolers, sweet Guest of the soul, delicious refreshment of wearied spirits!" God of all consolation, who comfortest us in all our tribulations, let the light of Thy countenance shine upon us. Dispel from us all clouds of gloom and sadness. Give us Thy blessed peace, that triple peace which Thou didst bestow on Thy Apostles—peace with God, peace with our neighbor, peace with ourselves. Give us that peace of God which "surpasseth all understanding," "which the world cannot give;" that peace which will keep our hearts serene and tranquil amid the storms of life, so that we may rejoice with exceeding great joy in the midst of our tribulations.

Reign over every faculty of our soul. Reign over our mind, that we may daily meditate on Thy mercies. Reign over our will that we may ever love Thee. Reign over our memory that we may be mindful of Thy past favors. Reign over our imagination, and the whole range of our thoughts. Reign over us in time and in eternity.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

MARVELOUS DIFFUSION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

MATT. XXVIII., 18-20.

LET us transport ourselves in spirit to the dawn of the Christian era, and let us stand in imagination on one of Pagan Rome's seven hills. We see at our feet that immense city teeming with a population, according to the estimate of Gibbon, of about three million inhabitants. We observe that metropolis dotted here and there with idolatrous temples, and niches to false gods erected in the corners of the streets. Those people are given up to every species of idolatry. They worship the sun and moon and stars of heaven. The seas and rivers, the mountains and groves have their tutelary divinities. They worship every striking object in nature. They worship every being except God only, to whom alone divine homage is due. In the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image and likeness of corruptible man, and of birds, and of beasts and creeping things, and they worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for evermore." [1]

Rome was the focus of the idolatry practised throughout the empire. Every divinity that was adored in the vast dominions of Rome, had his temple and his shrine in the imperial city.

What I say of Rome I might affirm of the Roman Empire, and what I affirm of the Roman Empire I

[1] Rom. i., 23-25.

could assert of the civilized world; for Rome was mistress of the world. Her empire extended into Europe as far as the river Danube; it extended into Asia as far as the Tigris and Euphrates, and into Africa as far as Mauritania. The whole world, with the exception of Palestine, was buried in the darkness of idolatry.

Such was the condition of society when our Lord appears on the theatre of public life. He calls around Him twelve insignificant men—men without wealth and destitute of human learning, men without the prestige of fame, without political, or social, or family influence, men without any of those elements that are considered at all times essential for the success of any great enterprise. He commands them to effect the most mighty moral revolution that has ever occurred in the history of the world. He commands them to uproot idolatry from the face of the earth, and to establish in its stead the worship of the one, true and living God. He commands them to eradicate the most darling and inveterate passions from the hearts of men, and to plant in their stead the peaceful reign of Jesus Christ. Well might the Gospel, which these men went forth to propagate, be compared to the little grain of mustard seed, small and almost imperceptible in the beginning, but expanding into a luxuriant tree, spreading its branches far and wide, so that the nations of the earth might be sheltered beneath its ample foliage, and be nourished by its perennial fruit. And well might these Apostles be likened to twelve little streams, deepening and broadening as they advanced, and not inundating the earth as of old, with the waters of destruction, but refreshing it with the rivers of eternal life.

The Apostles had implicit faith in their Divine Master when He commanded them to preach the Gospel to all nations. They knew He was God. They knew that His word was truth, that His word was power and omnipotence. They had been witnesses of His miracles. They knew that He who said in the beginning: "Let there be light, and there was light." Let the earth bring forth fruit, and it came forth; they knew that He would now through their instrumentality, cause the light of faith to shine on the darkened intellects of men, and the fruits of sanctification to grow abundantly in their hearts. And, therefore, they go forth nothing hesitating, and resolved to communicate the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to every portion of the Roman dominions.

They parcel out the Roman empire among themselves. Their only weapon is the cross, their only credential the Gospel of Christ. St. Peter commences his apostolic ministry in Jerusalem, where his first sermon is followed by the conversion of three thousand souls, some of whom had, no doubt, witnessed the crucifixion of our Savior, and perhaps even had a hand in His death. He afterwards establishes his see in Antioch, and finally suffers martyrdom in Rome.

St. Paul, the indefatigable teacher of the Gentiles, traverses various parts of Europe and Asia, everywhere bearing the torch of faith. St. Andrew preaches in Syria and Greece. St. John evangelizes Ephesus and Asia Minor. St. James announces the glad tidings in Judea and Galilee. St. Thomas carries the light of the Gospel to the remote Indies, and traces of the Christianity that he there established were discovered by St. Francis Xavier when he visited that country in the sixteenth century. And so on with the other Apostles. In

the words of the prophet, as applied by St. Paul, "their sound hath gone forth to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the whole world."

But if we are amazed at what I might call the pious audacity of the Apostles and their immediate successors, in undertaking the herculean task of converting the nations, we are still more astonished when we contemplate the result of their labors. St. Paul, about thirty years after our Lord's crucifixion, writes these words to the Romans: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ, because your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world," and, of course, spoken of by men who were in sympathy and communion with the faith of Rome. The religion of Christ had not only spread among the people of Rome, but neophites were found even in the palace of Nero.[1]

St. Justin, whose martyrdom occurred sixty-six years after the death of St. John the Evangelist, says: "There is no race of people, whether Greeks or barbarians, among whom prayers and the Eucharist are not offered to God the Father and Maker of all things, in the name of Jesus Christ crucified."

Tertullian, who was born about the year 160 of the Christian era, does not hesitate to address these words to the Roman Emperor: "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled your empire. Your cities, your towns, your islands, your forts, your army, your senate, your palace and Forum swarm with Christians. We have left nothing to you except your empty temples."

St. Irenaeus, who lived in the same century, bears witness also to the marvellous growth of the Gospel in his day, and he is careful to tell us that the faith of those times was everywhere identical.

[1] Phil. iv., 22.

"As the light," he says, "which illumines this world is everywhere the same, because it proceeds from the same great luminary of day, so is the light of faith that shines on the intellects of men everywhere identical, because it proceeds from Jesus Christ, the eternal Sun of Justice."

What a contrast presents itself to our minds between the peaceful conquests of the Apostles and their successors on the one hand and the bloody victories achieved by the great generals of antiquity on the other, whether we consider the weapons with which they fought, the battles which they won, or the duration of their victories. Alexander the Great, who may be considered one of the greatest generals of ancient times, subdued nations by wading through the blood of his fellow-beings. By the sword he conquered, and by the sword he kept his subjects in bondage. But scarcely was he consigned to the grave when his empire was dismembered, and his subjects shook off the yoke that had been imposed upon them.

The Apostles conquered kingdoms to their Divine Master, not by force, but by persuasion, not by the material sword, but by "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God," not by shedding the blood of others, but by the voluntary shedding of their own blood; not by enslaving the bodies of men, but by rescuing their souls from the slavery of sin. And the spiritual republic which they founded exists unto this day, is constantly extending its lines, and is consolidated, not by frowning fortifications and standing armies, but by the divine influence of religious and moral sanctions.

What does this prove? It proves that the pen and the voice are mightier than the sword. It proves that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than war," aye, victories more substantial

and more enduring. It proves that all schemes conceived in passion and fomented by lawless ambition are doomed, like the mountain torrent, to carry terror before them, and to leave ruin and desolation after them; while the mission of men laboring in the name, and under the inspiration of Heaven, is destined, like the gentle dew of heaven, to shed silent blessings around them and to bring forth abundant fruit in due season.

No rational or dispassionate mind can review the history of the infant Church without discerning the stamp of divinity impressed upon her brow. When we consider the rapid growth of the Christian religion and the feeble instruments that were employed to produce such results, when we consider the hostility the Apostles encountered in the whole course of their ministry, when we contemplate the opposition they met with from the learned and from the populace, from the priests of the Pagan superstition and from the established government itself; above all, when we reflect on the sublime and austere moral code which they proclaimed to a people whose religion tolerated and even sanctioned the most dissolute morals, we are forced to admit that Christianity is divine and miraculous in its origin. Well did St. Paul sound this key-note when he exclaimed: "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen that He might confound the wise, and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He might confound the strong, and the things that are contemptible and the things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his sight." [1]

And indeed the wisdom of God is specially manifested in the adoption of means utterly dispropor-

[1] I. Cor. i., 27-29.

tioned to the end to be attained, so that the world might be convinced that Christianity is the work, not of man but of God, and that all the glory should redound to Him.

For, if Christ had appeared in all the pomp and splendor of a temporal sovereign, if He had associated with Him the power of Caesar, if He had impressed into His service the armies of imperial Rome, the world would justly exclaim: There is no miracle here, for Christianity was propagated, not by the finger of God, but by the arms of the flesh. Or, if our Lord had employed in the service of His religion the poets and orators, the historians and literary men of His age; if He had inspired a Virgil and an Ovid, a Cicero and a Tacitus, to wield their pen and raise their voice in attestation of the new religion, then the world would cry out: There is no miracle here, for the Christian religion was propagated, not by the folly of the cross, but by "the persuasive words of human wisdom." Or, if our Savior had appeared as the possessor and distributor of immense wealth, if He had lavished bribes and bounties to induce men to embrace His doctrines, then the world would say: There is no miracle here, for men were drawn to the Christian faith, not by "the pearl of great price," but by the gold which glitters. But when we behold the religion of Christ established by the weapons of weakness, humility and poverty, we are forced to exclaim: "The finger of God is here!"

The historian Gibbon, the author of "*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,*" was obliged to admit the wonderful growth of the Christian religion in the first three centuries. But he endeavored to explain the phenomenon on purely natural grounds. He ascribes the spread of

Christianity to these five great causes: 1st, The indomitable zeal of the primitive Christians; 2d, Their pure and blameless lives; 3d, Their unshaken belief in the immortality of the soul; 4th, Their alleged power of working miracles; 5th, Their admirable organization.

There is no doubt, indeed, that these causes exerted a powerful influence on the propagation of Christianity. But I maintain that they were secondary and not primary causes. They were the effects of a first great cause. If you behold a beautiful placid lake, in your travels through Switzerland or the Adirondack Mountains, your curiosity may lead you to discover the streams which feed it. Your investigation is rewarded by finding five rivulets flowing into it. In pursuing your investigation still farther you find that these streams have their source in the snow-capped mountain in the distance. Let us apply this illustration to the subject before us.

Who inspired the primitive Christians with their unquenchable zeal and enthusiasm — an enthusiasm enduring for centuries and extending over the known world—an enthusiasm in an unpopular and hated cause? Who raised them to that high plane of moral rectitude? Who impressed them with that unclouded faith in the immortality of the soul and in a future destiny? Who imparted to them the power of working miracles? Who gave them that indissoluble organization cemented, not by force, but formed by the golden bonds of love?

Who was it but the Lord of Hosts? It was He who said: "Go teach all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." "Fear not, I have conquered the world." It was He who said: "The race is not to the

swift, nor the battle to the strong." It was He who said: "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain."

My brethren, imitate your forefathers in the faith by your unclouded belief in an immortal destiny. Imitate them by the rectitude of your lives and by your zeal for the honor of God and His Church. Imitate them, above all, by working miracles of grace and mercy, by your charity and compassion for the sufferings of your fellow-beings.

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

FORTY HOURS' ADORATION.

Apoc. I., 8-17, 18. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, and behold I live forever and ever."

THERE is this essential difference between Jesus Christ and the other founders of religions, that they lived, and died, and passed away, while Christ abides forever among us. He alone has said: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." I am with you, not only by My invisible grace to sanctify you, but also by My visible sacramental presence, to cheer and comfort you. Confucius and Buddha and Mohammed have stamped their names on the pages of history, but they have left after them only a memory. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is not only an historical personage who lived twenty centuries ago, but He is also a living Reality, always dwelling with us in the Blessed Sacrament. He is our Emmanuel, our God with us.

He was once born in Bethlehem, but He daily descends into thousands of sanctuaries. He sanctified the village of Nazareth by dwelling there in His youth. He sanctifies this temple by dwelling here perpetually. He died on Mount Calvary for our redemption. He is daily immolated on our altars in an unbloody manner, that the fruit of His Passion may be applied to us. He pardoned Magdalen and some other sinners while He walked in the flesh. He is every day pardoning repentant sinners throughout the world by the ministry of

His priests. He imparted the Holy Ghost to His Apostles before His ascension to Heaven. He is every moment communicating the same Holy Spirit to all portions of Christendom through the Sacrament of Confirmation, and other channels of grace.

At the Last Supper He blessed bread and wine, and changed them into His body and blood, and gave them to His disciples, saying: "Eat of this, for this is My body. Drink of this, this is My blood." He gives to us the same identical food for the nourishment of our souls, exhorting us to partake of it in memory of His passion.

On Palm Sunday He was led in solemn procession through the streets of Jerusalem, amid the hosannas and joyous acclamations of the multitude, and today He will pass among you, shedding benedictions along His pathway.

Thus, my brethren, is the Sun of Justice like the luminary of day, projecting Himself over every age and country, enlightening the minds and gladdening the hearts of men, and producing in them the fruits of grace and sanctification. Oh, with how much more reason can we exclaim than Moses did of old: "What nation is so privileged that hath its gods so nigh unto them as our God is nigh unto us?" If Jesus Christ were to appear for a single day in some spot on earth, what a vast concourse of people of all nations and religions, as well as of Christians, would hasten to greet Him! How eagerly they would throng around Him and embrace Him! They would gladly touch the hem of His garments. They would even kiss the ground on which He trod. How reverently they would treasure up in their memories every word that fell from His sacred lips, and how vividly would the expression of His countenance be stamped on their imagination! But, in order to find Him, you are

not obliged to cross the seas or to climb mountains, for in every Catholic Church and rude chapel that dots the surface of the globe He is present, and is "always living there to make intercession for us."

Some years ago I witnessed the Passion Play at Oberamergau in Bavaria. I was lifted up on that occasion to a higher plane of spiritual delight and consolation than I thought the soul capable of enjoying in this life. If the scenic representation of our Lord's Passion, and the reproduction of His words sung in harmony, could arouse so much emotion, how far more substantial and solid is your joy in being presented to Him in this sanctuary, where He is visible to the eye of faith, if not to the bodily senses, and where He can hear and aid you as powerfully as if you beheld Him as Stephen did, seated at the right hand of His Father in Heaven.

"Blessed are they," declares our Lord, "who have not seen and yet believe." And blessed are they who can say with the Apostle Thomas: "My Lord and my God." Happy are they who can discern their Lord under the veil and appearance of bread, as Thomas discerned His divinity under the garment of flesh. Happy are they who believe with an unshaken faith that Christ constituted this Church the guardian of His revelation and the infallible interpreter of its meaning.

When our Savior made the promise of giving His body to eat and His blood to drink, His words were received in a different manner by three classes of persons. The unbelievers scoffingly cried out: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Some of His vacillating and half-hearted followers said: "This is a hard saying, and who can hear it." And "many of them went back and walked no more with Him." The loyal disciples

were represented by Peter, who exclaimed: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Men are divided to-day, as they were in the days of our Redeemer, into three opposing camps. My friends, in which of these camps will you be enrolled? May I not interpret your reply? Ah, let some say with the incredulous multitude: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Let others say with the weak, unfaithful disciples: "This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?" But you will say with blessed Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go but to Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." We accept Thy promise with gratitude. We adore Thy mercy which is above all Thy works, and during these days of grace we will rereceive the Sacrament with faith and devotion, sustained by the promises which cannot fail: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day."

Some time ago the mortal remains of a distinguished American admiral were brought over from France, where they had rested for over a century, and were solemnly deposited in a mausoleum in the Naval Academy at Annapolis, in the presence of a vast number of spectators.

The ceremony was enlivened by the booming of cannon, the chanting of national hymns and the delivery of patriotic orations. The purpose of erecting the monument for the custody of the cherished relic in the Academy was to remind the young cadets of the heroism and victories of the brave commander and to stimulate in their breasts a martial spirit.

Is not this venerable Cathedral a mausoleum containing, not indeed, the lifeless ashes borne from across the seas, but the living Bread which cometh down from Heaven, and which is a per-

petual memorial of our Savior's passion, of His victory over death and of the glorious liberty of children of God which He has purchased for you? And should not the contemplation of this memorial enkindle within you a love for your Redeemer, and a greater zeal in practicing those Christian virtues that He has inculcated by word and example?

Louis IX. of France once put this question to King Henry III. of England: "Why is it that your Majesty is more fond of hearing Mass than of listening to a sermon?" "Because," replied the King, "I had rather speak face to face to my heavenly Friend than hear others speaking of Him." The sermons that we preach to you are the expositions of the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are the letters of the great King. But better than the letters of the King is the presence of the King Himself in our sanctuary: "The Lord is in His holy place, let the earth be silent."

On an occasion like this, silence is golden. My words must, therefore, be few, lest they interrupt the secret intercourse between you and your Maker.

When the Ark of the Covenant was brought by the priests from the City of David to the new temple which Solomon had built, an immense number of the children of Israel, with the King at their head, reverently followed, singing praises to the Lord. And the sweet notes of the organ and harp, of trumpet and psaltery, commingled with the solemn chant of the priests and people.

Today it is not the Ark of the Lord, but the Lord of the Ark that will be borne to our sanctuary. Let us then imitate the children of Israel "by singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord." And what more appropriate canticles can come to our lips than the sacred songs that are contained in the inspired volume, or that are con-

secrated by the usage of centuries in the Church? "Come, let us adore and bow down before our God. Let us weep in the presence of the Lord who made us. For He is the Lord, our God, and we are His people and the sheep of His fold."

Let us greet Him in the words that were chanted as He entered in triumph the city of Jerusalem: "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord." Let us sing the joyous anthem of praise that was first entoned by the angels on the day of His birth, and are repeated this morning by the choir: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to men of good will. We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We worship Thee. We glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty."

And let our hymns of praise and adoration be accompanied by thanksgiving to God for the many blessings He has conferred on us individually, on our devoted city, and on the nation at large. Let us repeat the majestic words of the Preface of the Mass: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is meet and just. It is truly meet and just, right and profitable that we should always and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, through Christ our Lord."

And may our Lord accept the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving as graciously as He accepted the holocaust of Solomon, and may He whisper to our hearts what He proclaimed to Israel's King: "Mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attentive to the prayers of him that shall pray in this place. For I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever, and mine eyes and my heart may remain there perpetually."

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

THE BANQUET OF THE EUCHARIST.

LUKE XIV., 16-24.

IN today's Gospel the Holy Eucharist is represented to us under the figure of a great Supper. Everything connected with this Banquet is great. It is great in its Host, who is our heavenly Father Himself; great in the Food that is set before us, which is the Body and Blood of Christ; great in the ministers that serve around the table, who are invisible Angels; great in the number of invited guests, who comprise persons of every rank and condition of life. The invitation is given, not only to the strong and healthy, that is, to those who are conspicuous for the integrity of Christian life, but it is also extended to the poor and maimed, the blind and the lame, that is, to those who are weighed down by moral delinquencies and deformities, that they may be restored to spiritual health and vigor.

My dear brethren, you nourish your bodies twice or thrice a day with corporal food, and if you abstain from eating for twenty-four hours you grow weak, and become incapable of attending to your usual employments. The soul has need of nourishment as well as the body, and if it is deprived of its proper refection it becomes faint and languid, and will die a spiritual death: "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood," says our Lord, "ye shall not have life in

you." How famished, then, must be the condition of the Christian soul that neglects to receive the Divine Bread during the course of several years!

It is written in the Book of Kings that the Phophet Elias traveling through the desert grew faint from hunger and lay down to die. But an angel came and gave him food to eat, on the strength of which he walked for forty days until he came to Mount Horeb. Like the Prophet Elias, you are traveling through the desert of this life. The bread which the Prophet received from the hands of an angel is the figure of the Bread of angels which you receive from the hands of God's ministers. If you fail to be fortified by this Bread, your soul will languish; but if you worthily partake of it, it will give you strength to pursue your journey through life, until you arrive at the true mountain of God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

When Jehovah was about to send his destroying angel to kill the first-born of every family in Egypt, the Israelites were commanded to slay a lamb, and sprinkle their door-posts with its blood, so that when the angel passed, he should spare those houses that were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb. If the blood of the Paschal lamb saved the Hebrew people from the destroying angel, how much more shall not our souls be saved from the attacks of the angel of darkness, provided we are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world!

While the Hebrew people were traveling through the Wilderness, God rained down manna upon them from heaven, which was their only food for forty years. The manna has always been considered by the Fathers of the Church a striking figure of the Eucharist. As the manna had the property of accommodating itself to the taste of each con-

sumer, so the Blessed Eucharist adapts itself to the spiritual wants of each recipient. It is the milk of childhood; it is the bread of the strong, and the staff of old age. It braces the timid and vacillating, and solaces the afflicted. It is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb, supplying us with strength, virtue and comfort proportioned to our moral needs. As the manna lasted as long as the Jews were in the desert, and ceased to fall when they entered the Promised Land, so does God nourish us with this spiritual Manna during our earthly pilgrimage, till we reach the true Land of Promise, where types and figures shall cease, where we shall see God face to face, and He will manifest Himself in His glory.

The frequent and pressing invitations of our Lord are the strongest motives that can urge us to receive His Body and Blood. He is the source of all solace and refreshment to the soul: "Come to Me," He says, "all ye who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you, and give rest to your souls." "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." "All ye that thirst, come to the waters, and ye that have no money, make haste, buy and eat. Why do ye spend money on that which is not bread? Hearken diligently and eat that which is good, and your soul shall be delighted in fatness." And again under the figure of a Bridegroom He invites us all, in the most urgent manner, to approach the heavenly banquet: "Behold, I have prepared My dinner, My beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the wedding." "I am the Bread of life," He continues, "he that eateth Me

shall never hunger, and he that drinketh Me shall never thirst."

Should not such appeals as these move the coldest and most obdurate hearts? Why will you starve with spiritual hunger when you have within your grasp the bread of life? Why will you be parched with thirst, when you can be refreshed at the fountain of living waters? Why shiver with cold, when you can be warmed at the Fire of divine love? Why languish and pine away with disease, when your heavenly Physician is so near at hand? Oh, why will ye die, oh, house of Israel, when the food of life and immortality is set before you?

What nation is like to the Christian nation that hath its God so nigh unto it as our God is nigh unto us? What a blessed privilege it is to be called to the table of the Lord! You would wish, no doubt, to visit the Holy Land, and tread the same ground that was sanctified by the footprints of our blessed Redeemer. You would bear home with you some particles of the clay of that country and preserve it as a precious relic. You would wish to behold Bethlehem, where He was born, Nazareth, where He lived, Calvary, where He died, the Cenacle in Jerusalem, where He instituted the Last Supper. You would love to contemplate the cross on which He was nailed. Behold, your ardent wishes are gratified. Here is Bethlehem, where Jesus is daily born for you. Here is Nazareth, where He lives for you. Here is Calvary, where He is daily immolated. Here is the Cenacle, where He has prepared for you the same banquet that He gave to His disciples. If you can not possess the wood of the cross on which He was crucified, you possess Him who was crucified on it.

You are careful, perhaps, to wear suspended from your neck, a scapular or a medal or a cross.

You have the picture of our Lord hung from the wall in your room. You bear about you the relic of some saint. This is good and commendable. It indicates a warmth of Catholic devotion. But while we should not overlook these lesser practices, let us not neglect the weightier things of the law. While we grasp at the shadow, let us not despise the substance. While we are careful to have the portrait of our Savior hung in our room, let us be still more solicitous to receive the original into our hearts in the Holy Communion. While we carry *about* us the decayed bones of God's servants, let us carry *within* us the living flesh of our Master, Jesus Christ. While we bear around us an Agnus Dei, let us bear within us the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world," so that we can say with the Apostle: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Well may we apply to the Eucharist what Moses said of the Commandments of the law: "This precious food is not in Heaven that you would say: Which of us can climb up to Heaven and bring it down; nor is it beyond the seas; that you should say: Which of us can cross the seas and lay hold of it; but it is nigh unto you; it is within the reach of all." "How many are there," observes St. Chrysostom, "who say: How I would wish to contemplate my Savior, to behold that Divine countenance, to see the sandals He wore. Behold you can see Him, and touch Him, and eat His flesh."

The Church, echoing the entreaties of our Lord, calls upon the faithful in the most pathetic language to have recourse to this heavenly banquet. Listen to the burning words which the Fathers of the Council of Trent addressed to the faithful of their times: "The Holy Synod, with paternal af-

fection, admonishes, encourages, begs and beseeches, by the bowels of the mercy of our God, that all and every one who bears the name of Christian should frequently receive this supersubstantial Bread." And again: "The Holy Synod would desire that all the faithful assisting at each Mass should communicate not only by a spiritual affection, but even by a sacramental reception of the Eucharist, in order that they might obtain a more abundant fruit from the most holy Sacrifice."

In the early days of the Church, such counsel was unnecessary, as the faithful were accustomed, of their own accord, to receive the holy Communion every day, in order to sanctify their daily labors, and to give them strength to battle with the temptations of the world. And where priests were scarce and the sacrifice was rare, the faithful were allowed to preserve the Blessed Sacrament in their homes, to be adored and received. And the martyrs of the Church, before confronting their executioners, took care, if possible, to carry with them, and to receive the Holy Eucharist, to be fortified and purified in their hour of trial.

But in the course of years, when persecutions had ceased, this fervor died away, and the Table of the Lord began to be almost entirely abandoned. It was in consequence of this neglect that the Council of Lateran, in 1215, obliged all the faithful, under pain of excommunication, to receive the Body of Christ at least once a year.

But besides the motives I have already presented to you, there is still another argument that should make a salutary impression on us and deter us from slighting this supreme means of grace: I refer to the penalty with which our Lord threatens those who refuse to have recourse to the

Holy Table. "Unless," He says, "ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you."

But, my brethren, if you are not aroused by the menaces of your Judge, I hope you will be drawn by the entreaties and rich promises of your Savior: "I am," He says, "the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever, and the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. . . . He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

When we call to mind the urgent reasons offered us to have recourse to the Holy Eucharist, when we consider that it is given to us as the food of our souls; when we remember the tender words in which our Lord invites us to this banquet; that the Church implores us with pressing entreaties; that it is so easy to approach this Sacrament; that not to receive it is death, and to receive it is life—I say, when we reflect on all these considerations, and yet see so many Christians who delay year after year to partake of the table of the Lord, we are amazed at such lamentable indifference. If there happen to be any such persons today within the reach of my voice, I would say to them: What excuse can you assign for your remissness? It is not want of faith, for the man who does not believe in the Real Presence cannot believe in the New Testament. You can not, therefore, say with the unbelieving Jews: "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" Nor can you say with the disloyal disciples: "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Nor can you justify yourselves by declaring that you are wretched sinners, unworthy to approach the holy Table. This is the language

of the slothful. Did not our Lord say: "I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance," and "Not they who are well, but they who are ill, have need of a physician?" The Communion is intended, not for angels, but for men. If you are unworthy, has He not given you the means of becoming an acceptable guest? Has He not provided a tribunal where your sins are forgiven and where you are supplied with a nuptial robe? Nor should you say: I observe many around me who frequent the Sacraments, and yet show no signs of moral reformation. There are, indeed, unfortunately, some who do not derive from the Holy Communion all the advantages it is intended to confer. The fault is not in the medicine, but in the patient; not in the food, but in the receiver.

Once more, you cannot complain that it is too expensive to receive the Sacraments, since there is no tax on confession, nor any price set on Communion, as you well know, no matter what the enemies of the Church may say to the contrary.

What, then, is the true cause of your coldness and indifference? It is simply this: We are so much engrossed by temporal cares and occupations, and by the pleasure of the senses, that we neglect the interests of the soul. The excuses for neglecting the table of the Lord are well set forth in this day's Gospel: "The first said, I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them. I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and, therefore, I *cannot come.*"

I beseech you, dearly beloved, when the Master of the house invites you, no matter how pressing may be your occupations, or how seductive the at-

tractions that restrain you, do not let those worldly affairs so absorb your attention as to prevent you from attending the divine Banquet. I have only a word to add, in regard to the dispositions with which you should approach the Holy Table.

When the people of God, under Moses, came to Mount Sinai, they were commanded to sanctify themselves for three days, and to wash their garments and thus prepare themselves for the Lord who was to appear on the Mount. And yet no one but Moses was permitted to ascend the mountain where God made Himself manifest. How much more favored are you than were the Jews, for you may ascend the mountain, yea, even to the altar of God! More privileged than Moses, for you may not only ascend the Mount, and converse with your incarnate Lord, but you may be nourished by His body and blood.

Your religious sense will prompt you to approach this Sacrament with profound reverence, with filial love and gratitude, and with a clean heart, which, by partaking of the body of Christ, becomes the temple of the living God; and, above all, with the blessed hope and joy of spirit which spring from the promises of Christ: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS."

LUKE XV., 1-10.

THERE were no two characters more diametrically opposed to each other than Christ and the Pharisee.

The Pharisee looked upon himself and the members of his sect as the select portion of God's vineyard. He imagined that the Almighty lavished upon him the choicest graces and benedictions, while for the rest of mankind He reserved the thunders of His maledictions. The Pharisee had a pious—I should say an impious—horror for sinners, whom he looked upon as beyond the pale of salvation; and, as if afraid of catching the contagion of their sin, he avoided them with as much caution as he would shun a man afflicted with leprosy.

Hence we find in this day's Gospel how he was offended, nay, scandalized, at seeing our Lord conversing and eating with sinners. "This man," he said, "receiveth sinners." He judged of Christ by the company that He kept.

But Jesus, who came on earth to reclaim sinners from the error of their ways, and who became all to all men that He might gain all to God, plainly told the Pharisees that He "came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance," and that "not they who are well, but they who are ill, have need of a physician." He therefore displays His mercy in receiving the repenting sinner with open arms,

in relieving his soul from the burden of his iniquity, and in granting him the kiss of peace and reconciliation, saying to him: "My son, be of good cheer: go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee." We never read of Christ saying a harsh word to the contrite transgressors. Rather did He greet them with those cheering words: "Come unto Me all ye who labor and are heavily burdened (by sin), and I will refresh you, and will give rest to your souls."

First—When we offend God He spares us. When we walk in the forbidden paths of vice, and wilfully displease our Maker by breaking His law, He could immediately strike us down. He could instantaneously send upon us the lightning of His wrath, and put an end to our lives, that He might put an end to our crimes. But He mercifully withholds His anger. When Peter denied his Master, did Jesus avenge Himself? No, the only revenge He took was to cast a look of tender reproach on His disciple, which filled his heart with sorrow. And when Jesus was conducted from court to court, and insulted in a thousand ways by the Jewish people, did He inflict on them summary vengeance? Did He summon legions of angels to smite His enemies, as He expressly declares He could have done, and as the impious King Jeroboam was instantly smitten for laying violent hands on the Prophet of the Lord? No; His only vengeance was proclaimed in these words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But why do we seek for examples of God's patience towards others? Are we not, ourselves, living monuments of His long-suffering forbearance? How much and how often have we offended God and He has borne with us? Or if He has chastised us, He has done so in His mercy, and not in His

indignation. He has sometimes cast a shadow over our criminal enjoyments, and embittered our cup of pleasure, that we might turn from our evil ways. His punishment was medicinal, and not vindictive. He treats us as He did Saul. Before his conversion, he was an unrelenting enemy of the Church. On his way to Damascus, breathing vengeance against the Christians of that city, he was suddenly stricken with blindness, and our Lord appearing to him, reproached him in words more like the language of an injured friend than of an offended God: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" O, well may we exclaim with Solomon: "Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in Heaven above or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants."

Second—When we wander far From God by sin, He eagerly seeks for us. Our Lord, in the parable of this day's Gospel, forcibly shows us His unwearying compassion for sinners in pursuing after them, and the lively interest He takes in their conversion.

A certain woman lost a piece of coin, of little value indeed in itself, but precious in her sight, because it was perhaps the only fruit of her toil, and in her eagerness to recover it she lights a candle, sweeps the room, and is finally rewarded by finding her lost treasure. In the fulness of her joy, she invites her neighbors to rejoice with her in the recovery of the coin. How aptly does every circumstance of this parable illustrate the solicitude with which God seeks for us when we have strayed away from Him.

Though we are of ourselves of little value, God esteems us because we were bought with a great price—even with the precious blood of His Son. As the woman lighted a candle to find her lost treasure, so does God cast the searchlight of His grace

on our souls, dispelling the darkness that envelopes us, and making us see in the light of faith the error of our ways. As she swept the room in the hope of disclosing the coin and bringing it to light, so does our heavenly Father disquiet and shake our soul by salutary remorse of conscience, filling us with wholesome fear. And as the woman did not hesitate to pick up the coin, though covered and soiled with dust, because she knew that it still retained the image of Caesar, which gave it value; in like manner our merciful Lord does not disdain to stoop down and lift us up from the mire of sin, because, how deeply soever we may be plunged in vice, God still sees stamped on our souls His immortal image and likeness. In the language of the Psalmist, "He raiseth up the needy from the earth and lifteth up the poor from the dunghill, that He may place him with the princes of the people," that is, among His elect.

In fine, as the woman invited her friends to rejoice with her on the recovery of her treasure, so does God invite His angels in the realms of bliss to rejoice and be glad in the restoration of a lost sinner, for "I say unto you," declares our Lord, "that there will be joy in Heaven upon one sinner that repenteth, more than upon ninety-nine just men who need not penance."

Third—When we return to God and sue for pardon, He instantly forgives us and receives us with open arms. Listen to the words of clemency He utters by the voice of His Prophet Ezechiel: "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he has committed, and keep all My Commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember his iniquities which he has done. . . . Is it My will that a sinner

should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted and live?"

How forcibly does the clemency of Jesus shine forth in His conduct towards Mary Magdalen! This sinful but penitent woman learns that Jesus is in the house of a certain Pharisee. She enters uninvited, lays aside all human respect, and in the exuberance of her love and gratitude, she falls at His feet, which she waters with her tears and dries with her hair. While the Pharisee looks on her with scorn and abhorrence, our Savior casts on her a look of tender compassion. While the Pharisee reproaches her for her misdeeds and expresses his indignation at her presumption in insulting the company by her presence, not one harsh word does Jesus utter, not a single allusion does He make to her past disorders. Yea, rather, His language is so full of sympathy and forgiveness that she is relieved from all embarrassment and confusion; and our Lord, turning to the Pharisee, says to him: "I say to thee: many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." And then addressing Magdalen, He sends her away with these cheering words, which relieve her overburdened heart: "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee."

How immense is the distance between God's treatment of a repentant sinner and man's conduct towards an offending brother! And how consoling is the thought that in the all-important affair of salvation, sinners have to deal, not with an earthly tribunal where, in the name of justice, the culprit is often overwhelmed with passionate denunciations, but that they are presented before a heavenly Judge, who has all the clemency and magnanimity of a God! In order to obtain forgiveness from the Almighty, and to be restored to the liberty and privileges of the children of God; in or-

der to be reinstated as citizens of Heaven and heirs of His eternal kingdom, you are not first subjected to an indefinite period of probation to test your sincerity. You are not habitually taunted for your past offences. The only condition of pardon that God requires is a contrite heart, sincerely repentant of past transgressions. If you can say with the sorrow of David: "I have sinned against the Lord," quicker than the lightning from heaven does God send you a full pardon in these words: "The Lord also hath taken away thy sin. Thou shalt not die." O! well may we exclaim with the Royal Prophet, when he was offered a choice of punishment from God or from men: "It is better that I should fall into the hands of the Lord (for His mercies are many) than into the hands of men." [1]

The same spirit of mercy and clemency that actuated our Savior during His mortal life always animates His Spouse, the Church. The mantle of Jesus has fallen on her, and in her the spirit of Jesus "lives, and moves, and has its being." The Church, like our blessed Lord, has always an undisguised abhorrence for those modern Pharisees who roll up their eyes in holy horror at the sight of a wayward soul, and who say to the sinner: Approach me not, keep far from me, for I am undefiled. On the contrary, there is no one for whom the Church has a more tender sympathy, there is none in whom she takes a livelier interest than in those who are weighed down by the burden of their sins. No matter how repulsive may be the crime; no matter how loathsome the moral disease, she does not disdain to stoop down and lift them up. She bids them not to despair, but to repent, and then "if their sins be as scarlet, they shall be made

[1] II. K. xxiv., 14.

white as snow; if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."

I shall conclude with a few brief reflections. I have spoken to you of the mercy of God; but I might leave on some minds a wrong impression if I did not add this important consideration, that if God is merciful to sinners, it is only to such as are truly sorry for their transgressions and resolve to amend their lives.

If Jesus sent Magdalen away rejoicing with a light heart, it was after she had washed His feet with tears of contrition, and wiped them with her hair. If the Publican left the temple justified before God, it was only after he had made an humble confession of his sins, exclaiming: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

If the Father received with open arms the Prodigal Son it was not until he had made this acknowledgment and taken this resolution: "I will arise and will go to my father and will say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee. I am not worthy to be called thy son." If the Prodigal had not acted on the inspiration of the moment, he might have lived and died an outcast from his father's house.

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

This golden opportunity influences not only our temporal, but also our eternal destiny. In the life of many of us there is some clearly-defined incident that marks a turning point in our spiritual career—an occasion that gave us an impetus in the right direction. It was, perhaps, a trifling circumstance—a seed silently cast into your heart, where it slowly germinated—it was a mission, a casual sermon, or the perusal of some striking

passage of Sacred Scripture that had a direct application to us, or it was a deep-rooted sorrow, or an unwonted illumination of the soul. But it formed a first link in the chain of subsequent events, and when we look back, we inwardly exclaim, with a sense of awe and gratitude: What a blessed influence that occurrence exerted on my after years!

God grant that this may be a decisive and auspicious day to some of you: "Today, if you hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts." [1]

Dearly beloved, it is always perilous, it is often fatal, to put off our conversion from day to day; "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." The present is the only moment you can call your own. The past is irrevocable. The future is beyond your reach, and may never come within your grasp.

The promise of pardon which your Father now holds out to you, His tender appeal, may never be renewed; and though His mercies are infinite, and though He should invite you again to return to Him, what guaranty have you that your heart may not be steeled against Him and that you may not hear this awful denunciation of the Sacred Text: "I called, and you refused. I stretched forth My hands and you did not regard Me. You have despised My counsel, and have neglected My reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, when that shall come to you which you feared, when tribulation and distress shall come upon you. Then shall you call on Me, and I will not hear." [2]

If, therefore, you would experience the mercy of the Lord, you must, like Magdalen, kneel in spirit at the feet of Jesus, and bathe them with

[1] Heb. iii. [2] Prov. i.

tears of compunction. If you wish, like the Publican, to return to your house in the friendship of God, you must, like him, make an humble confession of your sins. If you desire to be reconciled to your eternal Father, you must, like the Prodigal, break your chains of bondage and arise and go to Him.

O, be not content with hearing of God's mercies to others. Strive to be among the number of those who will be partakers of His clemency. Have a heartfelt aversion for your delinquencies. Send forth now strong and earnest appeals for pardon. Resolve to make without delay an humble confession of your sins, and to approach the table of the Lord, and then your heavenly Father will embrace you as a loving son. He will feed you with the bread of Heaven. He will send you from the Church with a lightsome heart, saying to you: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." And then you also will say with the choir of redeemed penitents: "The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LOSS AND GAIN.

ROM. VIII., 18-23.

ST. PAUL exhorts the Christians of Rome to the patient and even joyful endurance of adversities by the consideration of the brief term of their trials compared with the lasting and incomprehensible delights of the kingdom of Heaven.

The value of an earthly prize we may have won is enhanced in proportion to the efforts we have made in securing it and the sacrifice it has cost us.

I propose to consider this morning the question of loss and gain: what are the advantages and disadvantages in embracing the Catholic religion: what are the trials and difficulties we may confront, and what are the inestimable blessings which outweigh all the tribulations we may encounter.

One man will say to me: If I accept the Catholic religion my freedom of thought will be curtailed, my intellect will be cramped, my judgment will be hampered, and I will be restrained in the pursuit of scientific investigation. I will be in constant danger of falling foul of some ecclesiastical ukase warning me off the forbidden ground, as truant boys are cautioned against trespassing on their neighbor's orchard. Or my path is liable to be intercepted by a Pope's Bull that, metaphorically speaking, will gore me to death.

I can say without fear of contradiction that they who harbor such sentiments labor under a groundless apprehension. I shall endeavor to show that the Catholic religion, far from blocking the way of science, renders the most serviceable aid in the pursuit of human knowledge.

The Catholic Church teaches nothing but what has been revealed by God, or is plainly deducible from revelation. All truth comes from God, as all light proceeds from the sun. He is the Author of natural, as well as of revealed truth. One truth can never contradict another. No truth of revelation can ever be opposed to any truth of science. Natural and revealed truths always are, and always must be, in perfect harmony, and shed light upon one another, just as one star throws light upon another and expands our view of the firmament above us.

Religion and science, like Mary and Martha, are sisters, though occupied in different pursuits. Science, like Martha, is engaged in material pursuits. Religion, like Mary, is kneeling at the feet of her Lord.

Rest assured, then, that Christian faith will never stunt your intellect, or warp your judgment, or check your progress in the investigation of natural truths. On the contrary, faith will be as the sun, illumining your path. It will be as a landmark, guiding you onward in the region of science. It will be a beacon light, cautioning you to shun the shoals and quicksands, on which false science has often been shipwrecked.

And just because the Church fosters true science, she sets her face against false science. She is the divinely appointed guardian of revealed religion, and when she sees an adversary advancing some crude theory at variance with a fact of

revelation—the existence of God, for example, or His sanctity, or Providence, or the origin and unity of the human species, or the spirituality and immortality of the soul, which constitutes man's dignity and responsibility—she knows that her opponent's theory must be false, because she knows that God's revelation must be true. When she sees this man laying profane hands on the temple of faith, she cries out: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

And is she not right, for if God's revelation is at the mercy of every sciolist what becomes of the principles underlying our Christian society? Are they not like shifting sands? Rest assured that while the wild theories periodically advanced against Christianity may float for awhile on the surface of the human mind, like icebergs on the ocean, in the end they are sure to melt away before the effulgent rays of reason and revelation.

How, then, can we be asked to abandon the living fountain at which our forefathers slaked their thirst for centuries, and run after the mirage which pretentious men have conjured up before our imagination?

Achab, King of Israel, was ruler of a wide territory. He had a splendid palace surrounded by spacious lawns. But all this did not content him. He coveted, also, the vineyard of Naboth. But Naboth said to him: "The Lord be merciful to me, and not let me give thee the inheritance of my fathers." The king of science has wide fields to explore. He can roam through the whole material world, including the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth. But when he trenches on God's acre, the field of revelation, we must say to him: God forbid that

we should surrender to you the heritage of our fathers.

Another will present this objection: If I embrace the Catholic religion I shall have to surrender my moral freedom; I shall no longer be guided in the path of duty by my conscience, by my own sense of right and wrong, but by the capricious humor and dictates of a priest. He will be the keeper of my conscience; I shall be blindly led by him, and must submissively say that black is white, if he so decide.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that this is another groundless illusion. I can declare without fear of contradiction that there is no class of Christians that enjoys a higher degree of moral independence, consistent with their submission to God's law, than the members of the Catholic Church; for they are directed in the path of duty, not by the ever-changing *ipsedixit* of an irresponsible teacher, but by the unchangeable law of God.

If, indeed, to love the priest, to respect his authority, to regard him as the representative of Christ and the dispenser of the mysteries of God, if this is slavery, then, indeed, the children of the Church are slaves, and what is more, they glory in their bondage.

But in point of fact, the only restraint imposed upon you by the Catholic religion and her ministers is the restraint of the Divine law and of the Gospel, and to this restraint no reasonable Christian man has a right to object. The only yoke she imposes is the yoke of Christ, whose yoke is sweet, and whose burden is light. The Church grants you all the liberty that Christ has given—nothing more, nothing less. But liberty must have its bounds. Liberty without restraint is license. And it is only such as observe this legitimate restraint

that enjoy true liberty, the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free—"the glorious liberty of the children of God."

But perhaps you will say: In embracing the Catholic religion I may compromise my temporal interests, I may snap asunder, or at least loosen, many a sacred tie of friendship. I may alienate the tender affection of my nearest relatives, and even those of my own household. They may asperse my motives, and accuse me of deception and ingratitude, when I am only obeying the stern voice of conscience. All this I admit, and a great deal more, as I know from a long experience in the sacred ministry.

Did not our divine Lord Himself predict every word of this hostility, so as to prepare His disciples for the struggle when it came?

In the Gospel of St. Matthew,[1] our Savior thus addresses His disciples: "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household? . . . And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul into hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father; better are you than many sparrows. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Everyone, therefore, that shall confess Me before men I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven. But Him that shall deny Me before men I will also deny before My Father who is in Heaven. Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance

[1] Chap. x.

against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. And a man's enemies will be those of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for Me shall find it." In these words we read a prophecy foreshadowing the trials and vicissitudes of those of you who are loyal to your conscience; we find an instruction to enlighten you and an example to cheer you. heer

I need not say that while you unjustly incur the hostility of relatives and friends, far from being permitted to retaliate, your religion enjoins on you a greater love for them. After I had received into the Church a prominent gentleman of this city, his wife sadly remarked: "I presume that your change of faith will alienate your affection from me, and create a chasm between us." "On the contrary," replied the convert, "the Cardinal impressed this counsel on me, that I should be a more loving and devoted husband than ever I was before."

I have set before you your probable loss. Let me now place before you your certain gain. You gain everything that is worth having. You acquire a full and connected knowledge of God's revelation, as far as it is necessary for your salvation. You get possession of the whole truth as it is in Jesus. You no longer see it in fragments, but reflected before you in all its beauty as in a polished mirror.

Your knowledge of the truth is not only complete and harmonious, but it becomes fixed and

steady. You exchange mere opinion and conjecture for certainty. You are no longer tossed about by every wind of doctrine, but you are firmly anchored in the harbor of truth and peace.

As a compensation for the loss of earthly goods you possess the inestimable treasures of God's grace. The exterior of the earthly habitation can well afford to be stripped of some of its decorations, provided the interior tabernacle is adorned with the jewel of faith and the gold of charity. "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians, for he looked unto the reward." As a compensation for the external shocks you may sustain in the loss of friends you will have that interior peace which the world cannot take from you—that peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, that peace which springs from the conscious possession of the truth. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." O blessed is that freedom that delivers us from the bondage of doubt and error! With the Apostle you can say: "I rejoice with exceeding great joy in the midst of my tribulations."

For the transient estrangement of relatives, you gain the friendship of God, of His angels and saints; for, in coming to the Church, "you are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the Church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament." [1]

And in coming to the Church you are not entering a strange place, but you are returning to your

[1] Heb. xii.

father's home. The house and furniture may look odd to you, but it is just the same as when your fathers left it some centuries ago. In returning to the Church you worship where your fathers worshiped before you. You kneel before the altar at which they knelt. You receive the Sacraments which they received, and bow to the authority which they venerated. You come back, like the Prodigal Son, to the home of your father and mother; and the garment of joy is placed on you, and the banquet of love is set before you, and you receive the kiss of peace as the pledge of your filiation and adoption. O, one hearty embrace of your tender mother is more than enough to recompense you for all the sacrifices you have made, and you will exclaim with the penitent Augustin: "Too late have I known Thee, O beauty ever ancient and ever new, too late have I loved Thee."

You are all familiar with the name of a statesman whom Maryland loves to honor, and whose name is enshrined in the hearts of the American people. He was the friend of Washington and Adams, of Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin, and other leaders of the Revolution. He was so familiar with the signers of the Declaration of Independence that he said were he to enter the hall where they sat, and to meet them again, he would recognize every one, from the first to the last.

He took an active and leading part in securing the independence of the American colonies. He was the last signer of the immortal instrument, the Declaration of Independence, and he affixed his name to that Declaration at the risk of his vast possessions, for he was the richest land-owner of the colonies. He served his native State in her halls of legislation, and in the United States Senate.

According to the testimony of Rev. Charles Constantine Pise, who attended him in his last illness, he made the following remark a few days before he died: "I have lived to my ninety-sixth year. I have enjoyed continued health. I have been blessed with great wealth, prosperity, and most of the good things that the world can bestow—public approbation, esteem, applause. But what I look back on with the greatest satisfaction to myself is that I have kept the faith and practised the duties of my religion." I refer to Charles Carroll of Carrollton.

Remember that nothing is so essential to the salvation of your immortal soul as the gift of faith: "For what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, and what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Let not, therefore, the fear of offending friends and relatives, nor the persecution of men, nor the loss of earthly goods, nor any other temporal calamity, deter you from investigating and embracing the true religion, "for our present tribulation which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." May God give you light to see the truth, and, having seen it, may He give you courage and grace to embrace it.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE MORAL ASPECTS OF SUICIDE.

MATT. v., 20-24. "Thou shalt not kill."

EVERY close observer of contemporary events, and every lover of his country and his fellowmen, cannot fail to view with alarm the frequency of suicide within our borders. We can scarcely pick up a daily paper without reading of despondent persons of both sexes, and of every age and condition of life, taking a fatal leap into "the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns."

I have now lying before me the official record of suicides in the United States from 1885 to 1903, which is calculated to excite in every patriotic and humane breast sentiments of compassion and deep concern. These statistics show a steady increase in nineteen years in this class of crime and misery.

I deem it, however, unnecessary to set before you these figures in detail, for though appalling in their number, they are quite incomplete, and, indeed, they bear but a limited proportion to the fearful catalogue of suicides that are studiously suppressed, in consequence of the instinctive horror and disgrace attached to deeds of self-destruction.

It is true, indeed, that the Church has somewhat mitigated the severity of her discipline regarding the Christian burial of suicides, or at least she interprets each individual case as mildly as

circumstances will admit, by giving the benefit of the doubt in favor of the deceased. It may also be observed that the English law which punishes the crime of *Felo de se* by forfeiture to the crown of the goods and chattels of the deceased, and by the ignominious treatment of his body, was revoked in the reign of George IV., in the first half of the last century. And it may be further added that no statutory legislation was ever framed against suicides by the United States. Nevertheless, there always remains deep rooted in the human breast a horror for the crime and a sense of shame and humiliation weighing heavily on the surviving members of the family.

In the history of the Hebrew people, as recorded in the pages of the Old Testament, and in the history of the primitive Christians, as contained in the New Testament, I can recall the names of only five persons who ended their lives by their own hands. And to the honor of the female sex, it can be affirmed that in the whole narrative of the Bible there is not a solitary instance of any woman inflicting death upon herself. The reasons for the rarity of this crime among those worshippers of Jehovah and of Christ are easily explained. Those people were taught to believe that self-murder is a grievous sin, and that man is responsible to God in the life to come for the iniquities done in the flesh. The five men mentioned in Scripture as having died by their own hands are Achitophel, Zambri, Razias, King Saul, and Judas Iscariot.

Achitophel had conspired with Absalom against King David, his father, and when he learned that his treason was discovered, he hanged himself.[1]

Zambri had usurped the throne of Israel, and "seeing that the city (which he occupied) was

[1] II. Sam. xvii., 23.

about to be taken, he went into the palace, and burnt himself with the king's house, and he died."[1]

Razias stabbed himself to death rather than fall into the hands of his enemies.[2]

A dark shadow overhung Saul soon after he was crowned king, which seemed to presage his ultimate downfall. He was gloomy and morose, vindictive and revengeful. He was possessed by the demon of unjust suspicion and jealousy towards David, whom he often sought to kill. Because Achimelech, the high priest, had befriended David, Saul put to death eighty-five priests, besides a multitude of men, women and children. In his last days, instead of calling on the Lord of Israel, he consults the sorceress of Endor, just as we read of the unhappy Macbeth consulting the witches on the Scottish Heath. Saul finally ends his life by falling on his sword.[3]

Judas Iscariot was one of the chosen twelve. His besetting sin was avarice, which prompted him to sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver, and then in a paroxysm of grief and despair, he hanged himself. Of him our Lord pronounced this awful sentence: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed. It were better for that man if he had not been born." Peter had committed a crime almost as grievous as that of Judas; but Peter shed bitter tears of repentance, and his Master forgave him. The compassionate Savior would have instantly absolved Judas, as He pardoned the Prince of the Apostles, if he had done penance for his iniquity.

Samson is not included here in the catalogue of Scripture suicides, as his primary object in demolishing the house was to destroy the lives of his enemies, in whose death he happened to be in-

[1] III. K. xvi. 18. [2] II. Mach. xiv. 41. [3] I, Sam. xxxi. 4.

volved. To be avenged on the Philistines, he shook the pillars of the house in which about three thousand persons were assembled, and "the house fell upon all the princes and the rest of the multitude that was there" and he perished with them.[1]

Virgil, the great Mantuan Poet, following the traditional belief of the ancient Romans, consigns to Tartarus a victim of self-destruction, though she was stained with no other crime.

Suicide was, however, regarded as a heroic virture among the Stoics of Pagan Rome. Many of its most illustrious citizens compassed their own death, and the influence of their pernicious example served as an incentive to others by lending additional lustre to the deed, just as the habit of duelling in certain periods of English and American history was deemed honorable, because it was sanctioned and exercised by citizens enjoying public esteem.

Cato was reputed among the most conspicuous and wisest of Roman sages. He put an end to his life rather than submit to the humiliation of having it prolonged by the clemency of the victorious Caesar. He disdained to survive by the grace and favor of his enemy. And yet, by a strange inconsistency, he advised his beloved son to placate Caesar. For surely it could not be dishonorable in the father, and at the same time, honorable in the son, to accept favors from a triumphant adversary. By the canons of right reason, Cato's self-inflicted death must be regarded as an act, not of sublime courage, but of moral cowardice.

Marcus Brutus, another conspicuous Roman, in his younger days, when he could reason more dispassionately, blamed Cato for killing himself, regarding such a deed as irreligious and not a val-

[1] Judges xvi.

iant one. He said that it was Cato's duty not to evade the course of Providence, but to bear fearlessly the adversities that confronted him.

But when Brutus was defeated at the battle of Philippi, his fortitude and philosophy forsook him, and following Cato's example, he stabbed himself rather than submit to the good pleasure of the victorious Antony.

The chaste Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, affords another example of suicide in ancient Rome, and a perverted exhibition of heroic virtue. In the absence of her husband, she was forcibly violated by the voluptuous son of Tarquin, the Proud. After informing her husband and father of the outrage, and after exacting of them a promise to avenge the foul deed, she stabbed herself to death rather than survive the degradation to which she had been subjected.

It is evident that her soul was not sullied by young Tarquin's adultery. Rather did her conjugal chastity receive additional lustre by her resistance to her ravisher. Why, then, did she slay herself? If a judge had condemned her to death, innocent, unheard and untried, he would have merited capital punishment. Why, then, did the innocent Lucretia inflict death on herself, and thus become a murderess? Surely she deserved a better fate. Had she outlived the desecration of her person, and borne the shame, she would have merited the praise of all righteous men, and would have spared herself the odium of having slain an unoffending matron. Viewing her life by the Christian standard, we must applaud her conjugal purity, and pity her involuntary debasement, though we cannot approve of the death penalty she inflicted upon herself.

Even had Lucretia been a willing participator

in Tarquin's crime, she would have sinned in sacrificing her life: how much more grievous, therefore, is her offense in putting to death an innocent woman.

As Socrates and Seneca were the *unwilling* agents of their own death, they must both be acquitted of voluntary suicide. The Greek Philosopher was most unjustly condemned to die by the decree of the Athenian judges, and the Roman was sentenced by the impious Nero. The former ended his life by drinking hemlock, the latter by having the veins of his arms and legs opened.

As to the causes of suicides, there is no doubt that a considerable number of them is due to a disordered and an unbalanced mind, for which it is hoped the unfortunate victims are not fully responsible. But after making all due allowance for suicidal mania, the great bulk of those who compass their own death act with deliberation, and are accountable to God and man for the deed they commit. Whatever may be the immediate incentive to suicides, they can be primarily traced to moral cowardice and the absence of religious restraints. Even the pagan philosopher Aristotle ascribes these acts to a want of moral courage.

One man has for months and years been secretly plundering an institution of which he was regarded as the responsible head or custodian. He can no longer hide his embezzlements by false entries. He is afraid to face an outraged public, and he escapes the temporal punishment of his transgressions by putting an end to his life. He leaves, perhaps, behind him a desolate family to bear the burden and the odium of his crimes.

Another is suddenly bereft of a fond wife or a favorite child, and he cannot survive the desolation that has visited the family circle.

Another has been leading a dual life; he has been wallowing in the mire of sinful pleasures. He finds that he can no longer maintain the honor of his good name. His licentious career is sure to be exposed, and rather than confront the frown of his fellow-citizens he abruptly shortens his career.

Another man is afflicted with a tedious disease which causes him excruciating pains and sufferings; or he is tormented by various kinds of domestic infelicities; and in a moment of aggravated misery he stamps out his life by a bullet or poison.

Unrequited love is another fruitful cause of untimely deaths. A young and confiding lady is disappointed or betrayed in her affections by a faithless or fickle lover, and in a paroxysm of grief she seeks refuge in the grave from the sorrow she feels unable to bear. While woman's love is more intense, more emotional and concentrated, man's love is more violent and tumultuous. Hence a disconsolate female, when rejected by a lover, will be usually content with sacrificing her own life: but the ardent lover of the male sex, when maddened by the demon of jealousy, will often immolate, on the same funeral pyre, the object of his passion as well as himself. The Didos are willing to travel alone into the unexplored region: the Othellos desire to be accompanied by the idol of their affections.

Many others are impelled to lay violent hands on themselves on account of an intolerable mental strain, occasioned by the struggle for commercial supremacy. Keen competition in business, feverish thirst for wealth, hazardous enterprizes in which all is staked, followed by a sudden crash in securities, these financial ventures and failures fill the unhappy speculator with despair, and rather

than survive the wreck, he seeks refuge in self-inflicted death.

Unfortunately the victims of these mental and physical sufferings have no religious convictions to sustain them in their hour of sorrow and despondency, or to deter them from their fatal step by the dread of future punishment. They have had a hazy view of religion. They gave little or no consideration to the immortality of the soul and the life to come. They had no fear of God and no sense of their responsibility to Him. Their thoughts rarely, if ever, dwelt on the great hereafter. They are likened to the man mentioned in the Gospel "who built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." How different is the conduct of the God-fearing man under similar temptations and trials! He is afraid to live; but he is more afraid to die by his own hand. He is dismayed, indeed, by the prospect of the disgrace and sufferings which haunt him, but he is more appalled by the terrors of the life to come. He shrinks from the gaze of men, but he recoils with greater horror from the frown of an avenging God. His conscience tells him that present tribulations, though hard to endure, bear no proportion to eternal retributions. This thought is forcibly expressed in Hamlet's soliloquies:

"O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!"

* * * * * * * *

"To be, or not to be, — that is the question; —
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? — To die, — to sleep —
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, — to sleep; —
To sleep! perchance to dream: — ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death, —
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveler returns, — puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

As to its moral aspects, suicide is manifestly forbidden by the Divine law. One of the Commandments of the Decalogue declares: "Thou shalt not kill." To make the law as comprehensive as possible, it is not said: Thou shalt not kill *thy neighbor,* which qualifying phrase is employed in some of the other Commandments, as for instance, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house." The prohibition to kill is, therefore, absolute. It forbids the taking of human life, whether by suicide or by homicide.

There is another Commandment which says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Now, the love which we owe to our neighbor forbids us to slay him, and, therefore, the love which we owe to ourselves forbids us to compass our own death.

If the law allowed us to kill ourselves, while forbidding us to kill our neighbor, our love for our neighbor would not be equal, but superior to our love for ourselves.

Nay, I hold that suicide is a more revolting sin than the killing of another. The closer the ties of relationship between the murderer and the victim, the more atrocious is the crime. In the estimation of mankind, a parricide, or matricide, or fratricide, or uxoricide, is a more shocking criminal than an ordinary homicide. And as a man has more intimate relations to himself than to a parent, or brother, or wife, his deliberate self-destruction should excite more horror than the murder of a parent, brother or wife.

Voluntary self-murder is not only a violation of the Divine law, but is also a crime against society. We are social beings. We owe a duty to the Commonwealth as well as to ourselves. We mutually depend upon one another like the members of our physical body. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."[1] Human society may be compared to a grand army, every member of which has a special place and mission assigned to him by his Sovereign Commander. To abandon the post of duty entrusted to a sentinel is regarded by the military code as a most cowardly act which is punished with extreme rigor. What less does the suicide do than basely abandon the situation assigned to him in the warfare of life?

And there is no vice more contagious than cowardly desertion. It is often followed by a general mutiny. The same is true of suicide. When a few deeds of self-murder are widely circulated by the press, they are not unfrequently followed by

[1] Rom. xiv., 7.

wholesale voluntary slaughters. A suicidal wave rolls over the land.

You will say: In killing myself, I injure no one but myself. This excuse, so commonly made, involves a capital error. You do not belong to yourself, but to your Creator. God gave you, indeed, dominion over all inferior creatures when He said: "Rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." But dominion over yourself and your fellow-man He has never surrendered, but reserves to Himself. Therefore, in taking your life you destroy that which is not your own.

Our Creator has an absolute sovereignty over the human family. "Thou, O Lord, hast power of life and death."[1] "Behold, all souls are mine."[2] God brought us into this world without our knowledge and volition. He desires that we should depart from it in the manner and time that He has decreed. He demands our life-long service. By self-immolation we defeat the ends of our Creator. We usurp His authority. We rebel against His will. By His Prophet He says to us: "Thou hast broken My yoke, thou hast burst My bonds. Thou saidst: I will not serve."

Impious invader of a divine prerogative in destroying God's handiwork! Stand now in spirit over that body which you have bereft of life. Try to re-enter and re-animate that house of clay you have abandoned. Breathe into those nostrils the breath of life. Rekindle the spark you have suddenly extinguished. Bring back light to those vacant eyes. Restore to vigor the hand which has committed the foul deed. Alas! how mighty you are for evil; how powerless for good! All the combined skill and science of man is utterly un-

[1] Wis. xvi., 13. [2] Ezech. xviii., 4.

able to give you back one moment of the life you have forfeited.

The fallacy of the assertion that the suicide injures no one but himself is manifest when we consider the dire consequences which such a statement may involve. Suppose that a number of the leading men of the community were to blow out their brains in the height of a financial crisis, the whole town would be thrown into confusion, business would be partially paralyzed and a reign of disquiet and uncertainty would prevail before confidence could be restored. And then consider the legacy of sorrow and of suffering that the self-destroying father leaves to the inner circle of his wife and children.

You will say, perhaps: No one will mourn or miss me. I am a social outcast without human ties. I will answer that no matter how poor, or worthless, or desolate a man may be, he has a mission from God to fulfil, he has some ties with his fellow-being, and he can be a useful, though unobstrusive, factor in the great social organization. He can soften the wrath of the choleric by his meekness under provocation. He can edify the murmurer against Providence by his patience in adversity; and by subsisting on the charity of others he can give them an opportunity of exercising the virtue of benevolence.

Another will say: As I am doomed to an early death by a fatal disease, is it not a mercy to me to give myself the *coup de grace,* and thus put an end to a life, which, in the order of nature, could last but a few days or weeks longer? This specious doctrine has been advanced among us by a lady prominent in social "reform," and has been endorsed by some members of the medical profession. In order to invest their scheme with a spirit

of caution and moderation, and to throw around it a semblance of safeguard, they recommend before life be extinguished that two physicians and a minister be called in, the former to certify to the fatal character of the malady, and the latter to give the patient the "benefit of clergy."

There is no doubt that some degenerate members of that noble and humane profession will be willing to pronounce sentence of death, and I fear that also a clergyman would be on hand who would be as tolerant and accommodating on the question of divorce from life as he sometimes is on the subject of divorce from marriage.

Once this dangerous principle is admitted, a door is opened wide for the indiscriminate toleration of suicide. An acute, though trivial, pain would tempt many to precipitate themselves to an untimely death. How many patients are there (I have known some myself) whose disease had been pronounced hopeless by respectable physicians, yet who were afterwards fully restored to health.

It would be a painful, fruitless task to discuss the moral disease of suicide, unless a remedy were suggested, which is the chief purpose of these reflections. It is a significant fact that in countries and districts where the Christian religion exercises a dominant sway, and where its teachings are faithfully practised, self-murder is almost unknown, and when such a tragedy occurs it excites unwonted horror throughout the community. I maintain, then, that a sovereign antidote against suicide is to be found in a strict compliance with the lessons set before us by the religion of Christ.

Divine revelation inculcates the sublime and consoling truth that Almighty God never surrenders for a moment the moral government of the world, that an over-ruling Providence "which

reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly," controls all human events, and makes them subservient to His eternal decrees: and consequently, that nothing can happen to us against His will; that the calamities which visit us, whether proceeding directly from the malice of men or occasioned by the accidents of life, if borne with Christian resignation, will ultimately redound to our spiritual advantage. "To them that love God," says the Apostle, "all things work together unto good."[1] "Whom the Lord loveth, He correcteth, even as a father, the son in whom he delighteth."[2] "Ye thought evil against me," said the Patriarch Joseph to his brethren, "but God turned it unto good, that He might exalt me, as at present you see, and might save many peoples."[3]

The righteous man, therefore, when subjected to the privation of health, of friends and of temporal prosperity, or to the unmerited loss of his good name, sees the hand of God in the adversities that befall him, and bears them with composure and equanimity. "If a crushed world would fall on him, the ruins would strike him undismayed." He sets before himself the example of the King of Martyrs, who said to His disciples: "The chalice which My Father hath given to Me, shall I not drink it?" He does not say: "The chalice which Pilate and Caiphas and the Jews have given Me." He waves them aside as secondary instruments of His eternal Father's merciful designs. How easily could Christ have escaped the lingering agony of the crucifixion by dispatching Himself in the Garden with Peter's sword! But the law of God, of which He was the interpreter and exemplar, forbade it.

[1] Rom. viii., 28. [2] Prov. iii., 12. [3] Gen. l., 20.

The upright Christian believes not only in the sanctity of human suffering, but also in its heavenly recompense, when endured for Christ's sake. He shares in the sentiments of the Apostle, who says that "our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure excedingly an eternal weight of glory"; and that "the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, which shall be revealed to us."

But the religion of Christ is not only a consolation to the righteous man in his tribulations; it also exerts a powerful influence in deterring the Christian transgressor from taking away his own life, because he knows that suicide is murder, and that "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself." He believes in the priceless value of repentance, which can transform a moral leper into one of God's elect, and an angel of darkness into an angel of light. He is taught by the Prophet that by contritely accusing himself, if his "sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow, and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."

Surely if any one might be excused for shortening his life, the Patriarch Job would be justified in putting an end to his miserable existence when he was oppressed by the overwhelming weight of miseries which afflicted him. His body is covered with ulcers; he is suddenly deprived of his possessions, bereft of his children; he is stung by the reproaches of his wife, and mocked by his false friends. The words of this model of patience have been the comfort and support of all succeeding ages. "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Every impartial judge, who compares the life of

Job with that of Cato, will accord a higher degree of heroic virtue to the Saint of the Bible than to the Sage of Utica. The one yielded to the storm of adversity, the other bravely confronted it.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

A PERSONAL PROVIDENCE.

MARK VIII., 1-9.

WE must admire the piety of the multitude that spent three days by the Sea of Galilee, so intent on the words of Christ that they neglected to attend to the wants of the body. But we must admire still more the providential care of our Lord, who exhorts us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things else will be added to us," and who on this occasion, miraculously fed four thousand men, besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few fishes.

I do not know of any truth of revelation more tranquillizing and more consoling to the human heart than the doctrine of God's special Providence over us. If I may disclose my own inward thought, I will avow that it has ever been to me the most reassuring of all Christian teachings, and one that has been a sustaining force to me amid the vicissitudes of a long life.

How comforting is the reflection that you are not a waif aimlessly drifting down the stream of life, but that your little bark is unceasingly under the guidance of the Divine Pilot; that amid the storms and tempests which rage around you, there is a Voice nearby that commands the winds and the waves; that, though the assassin's dagger is raised to strike, there is close to you an invisible Hand to arrest the arm that holds the dagger.

How cheering is the consideration that no matter how dark and lowering the clouds of sorrow that envelop you, the eternal Sun of Justice, in His own good time, and in the moment most suitable to your needs, will dispel those clouds, and will "enlighten you after you have sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and will direct your feet in the way of peace."[1] And then you can cry out in the exultant tones of the royal Prophet: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Whilst the wicked draw near against me, to eat my flesh. My enemies that trouble me, have themselves been weakened, and have fallen. If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident. For He hath hidden me in His tabernacle in the days of evil."[2]

In a word, how delightful the assurance that no injury can possibly befall you against the will of Him whom no power can resist: that God will make the very malice of your enemies to serve as instruments to exalt and glorify you, and that your momentary discomfitures will be so many stepping-stones to your final victory. "For, we know that to them that love God all things work together unto good, to such as according to His purpose are called to be saints."[3]

And in order to be assured of God's providential protection, the only condition required is that you rebel not against His holy will, but heartily abandon yourself to His good pleasure, and faithfully observe His law.

How can we doubt this special Providence when we reflect that our Creator has made us in His own

[1] Luke 1. [2] Ps. xxvi. [3] Rom. viii.

image and likeness, that He has endowed us with an immortal soul, that He has bestowed on us the God-like faculties of intelligence and free will; that He has appointed us the lords of His earthly domain, and that man is the only earthly being who is made partaker of these sublime gifts?

Nay, more, He has created us for a definite purpose and end. His wisdom and mercy required that He should perfect the work He has begun, by leading us onward to our destination by that providential guidance "which reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly";[1] and as this destiny shall be consummated only in the life to come, it follows that our Maker's guiding hand will accompany us throughout our present stage of existence, and will be perpetuated beyond it.

There is an inseparable connection between God's foreknowledge and His Providence; the one is the complement and the fulfilment of the other. Predestination is the end decreed by the Almighty; Providence is the means of attaining it: "Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son. . . . And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified. What, then, shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all how hath He not also with Him given us all things."[2]

If I were to place before you a pattern of strong affection and prudent foresight, I would naturally select as the embodiment of those virtues a benevolent father in his relations to his offspring. The father instinctively loves his child. From the

[1] Wis. viii. [2] Rom. viii.

moment of its birth the babe is the object of parental solicitude. To clothe, feed and shelter it is a labor of love. What is the spur that stimulates a father's zeal and industry in his daily pursuits? What motives prompt him to endure with patience and fortitude, heat and cold, fatigue and privation? It is his love for his infant and his desire to provide for its future wants. So closely is he identified with his offspring that he accounts himself happy or miserable in proportion as his child succeeds or fails in life. And so strictly is this parental tenderness in harmony with human nature that its exercise occasions no surprise, while its absence would brand the father as a moral monster.

And what is an earthly parent but a feeble representative of our heavenly Father, "of whom all paternity in Heaven and earth is named?"[1] Indeed, so distinctively expressive of our Creator's benevolent attributes is the title of Father that it is given to Him in the New Testament far more frequently than any other designation. It is the one name consecrated to Him in the Lord's Prayer. Our heavenly Father is the Prototype of all earthly parents. The more devoted a father is to his offspring, the more closely he resembles the Divine Model.

Can we, therefore, expect to discover in an earthly parent any beneficent characteristics not found in our Almighty Father? Shall the poor copy possess virtues not existing in the great Original? Can you imagine that God gave you life without intending to make provision for sustaining it, or that He endowed you with an immortal soul without supplying you with the graces required to reach your eternal destiny? Assured-

[1] Eph. iii.

ly not; for whatever love or foresight or tender devotion is found in an earthly father is but a faint ray of the sunlight that beams from the heart of your heavenly Father. Parental prudence is the shadowy human counterpart of divine Providence.

Many parents fail to make suitable provisions for their offspring on account of their inexperience and imperfect knowledge of parental duties, or owing to their scanty means, or to their apathy or misplaced affections. But our Heavenly Father does not labor under any of these defects. *He* cannot be ignorant of our needs, since our whole life is laid bare before Him. *He* cannot be suspected of inability to provide for us, since nothing is impossible to Him. *He* cannot be charged with indifference towards us, since He is essentially good and gracious. A God of infinite knowledge, He is acquainted with all our wants; a God of omnipotent power, He is abundantly able to supply them; a Father of tender compassion, He delights to make us happy.

Indeed, He knows our condition infinitely better than we do ourselves. How often have we longed for something with feverish anxiety, and God mercifully withheld from us the object of our wishes, knowing that it would prove to us an evil instead of a blessing, acting towards us like a prudent father who refuses to give his child a dangerous toy.

Nay, besides a father's care, He has more than a mother's undying love for us: "Can a woman," He says, "forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb and if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee." [1] If I were to ask you at what period of your life your mother concentrated on you her affections with the greatest

[1] Isaiah xlix., 15.

ardor, and watched you with the closest attention, you would say that it was in the days of your helpless and confiding infancy. In like manner, never are we more assured of our heavenly Father's protection than when we cast all our cares upon Him and abandon ourselves into the arms of His Providence.

No one who is familiar with the pages of the Sacred Scripture can fail to observe that the Patriarchs and Saints of the Old Testament had so profound a conviction of God's intervention in human affairs, that instead of ascribing the calamities which they endured to the malice of men, or to the violence of the elements, or to the accidents of life, or to any secondary cause, they referred them all to an overruling Providence.

This truth is forcibly exemplified in the history of the Patriarch Joseph. He was cruelly treated by his own brethren, who, after threatening him with death, cast him into a pit without water, and afterwards sold him for twenty pieces of silver. He was then carried into Egypt, and bought as a slave, and on a false charge was thrown into a dungeon where he languished for over two years. Joseph brushes aside the visible agents in that long train of sufferings, and discerns in them the controlling hand of the Almighty. He thus addresses his conscience-stricken brothers: "Not by your *counsel* was I sent hither, but by the *will of God* who hath made me as it were a father to Pharaoh and lord of his whole house."[1]

The history of Job affords another illustration of the subject. Within the space of a few hours, his oxen, beasts of burden and servants are slain by the Sabeans, his sheep are consumed by lightning, his camels are killed by the Chaldeans, his sons and daughters are crushed to death by a

[1] Gen. xlv.

violent storm, and, lastly, he himself is afflicted with a grievous ulcer which covers his whole body. Does Job ascribe his tribulations to the incursions of hostile tribes, or to the fire from heaven, or to the hurricane? *By no means,* but he sees in this terrible visitation the guiding finger of an almighty Power: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done. Blessed be the name of the Lord." [1]

I appeal, my dear brethren, to your own experience. Review your past lives. Examine the chain of incidents in the light of faith, and are you not forced to admit that those vicissitudes of health and sickness, those alternations of joy and sorrow, of prosperity and adversity, were but the handmaids of Providence, the frowns and caresses of a loving Father leading you on to your destination? And thus the testimony of your own observation confirms the voice of revelation, saying that "to them that love God, all things work together unto good."

Let me now refer to a popular objection against a personal Providence. Honor, riches and health, you will say, are gifts of God. Why, then, do the wicked so frequently possess them in abundance, while the righteous are so often afflicted by contempt, poverty and suffering? Why is the innocent Abel slain, while the fratricide, Cain, is allowed to roam the earth? Why is the impious Achab dwelling in an ivory palace, while Elias is hunted like a criminal? Why is Herod exalted on a throne, and John is immured in a dungeon? Why is Nero ruling an empire, while Paul is languishing in chains? Is it not reasonable to expect that the great Disposer of events should show partiality to His friends rather than to His enemies?

[1] Job i.

To this objection I will answer that, to judge adequately of God's Providence towards us, we must not restrict ourselves to a partial or one-sided view of man's destiny, but we must contemplate him in the whole cycle of his existence. We cannot judge of the success of a race until the contestants reach the goal. We must remember that man's soul is immortal, that his duration will be eternal, and that the day of final reckoning will come only at the term of the present life. Why, then, impeach the justice of our Creator if He permits the impious to prosper for a time, and defers rewarding His servants until the close of their earthly pilgrimage? "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." [1] And what are even a thousand years in comparison with eternity?

Does the soldier complain of the privations he endures or of the perils to which he is exposed, when he knows that the eyes of his commander are upon him, and that he will be promoted at the end of the campaign in proportion to his zeal in his country's cause? Does he feel aggrieved because he is not rewarded in the heat of the conflict? No, for he prefers to wait until his return home, when he will be welcomed by the plaudits of his countrymen, and will receive an abundant recompense from a grateful sovereign. And shall we have less faith in the promises of Christ than a soldier has in the assurance of his general? Why should we repine at the tribulations we endure in the battle-field of life, since they are the earnest of future recompense? "We glory in our tribulations," says the Apostle, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not." [2] And why should we

[1] II. Pet. iii, [2] Rom. v.

murmur that we are not requited here? Is it not better to wait until our earthly warfare is over, when our fellow-citizens will greet us in the heavenly Jerusalem, and the great King will reward us with an unfading crown of glory?

Blessed are ye, my brethren, if you live in an abiding consciousness of an overruling Providence. You will then never feel lonely, because you will never be alone. Like the infant nestling in its mother's breast, you have a sense of security and confidence. You are always basking in the sunlight of God's presence. Or, if at times, His face is dark and lowering, you still recognize it as the face of a loving Father, and you are assured that "whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." [1]

The world is not an enigma to you as it is to others. It is a mirror reflecting your Father's countenance. It is an open Bible, in which you read God's dealings with His creatures. No event will startle or confound you, or shake your faith, because you know that everything that occurs, from the fall of an empire to the flight of a bird, is controlled by the moral Governor of the world. With the Royal Prophet, you will exclaim: "The Lord is my Shepherd, and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment. He hath led me on the path of justice for His own name's sake. For, though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me." [2]

[1] Prov. iii. [2] Ps. xxii.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE PREROGATIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MORAL FREEDOM.

MATT. VII., 15-21.

THERE are various kinds and degrees of human liberty. The first is physical or bodily freedom, which makes you capable of moving from place to place, and which has enabled you to come today to the house of God. Prisoners and the sick are deprived of that freedom.

The second is civil liberty, which invests you with the privilege of voting for the candidate of your choice, and of exercising other prerogatives of an American citizen. The third kind of liberty is called religious freedom, which empowers you to worship God in public according to the dictates of your conscience.

The next kind of liberty is moral freedom, by virtue of which you can select between good and evil, virtue and vice. You can blaspheme or praise your Creator, keep the commandments or violate them. It is of this last form of liberty that I shall speak today. How sublime is the faculty of free will! It is a gift which distinguishes you from the brute creation; for man is the only creature on earth that enjoys moral freedom.

What a tremendous responsibility is attached to this perilous gift! If righteously employed, it becomes an instrument of unending bliss. If abused, it becomes an engine of endless destruction. If kept within the bounds of the moral law, it is a

heavenly stream, enriching the kingdom of the soul with fruits of grace and benediction. If it leaps its legitimate barriers, it covers the earth with ruin and desolation.

It is the exercise of the will that distinguishes the saint from the sinner, the martyr from the apostate, the hero from the coward, the benevolent ruler from the capricious tyrant. The names of Nero and Diocletian, of Achab and Jezabel, of Judas and Herod, are execrated by mankind because they abused their free will in gratifying their passions and in inflicting sorrow and misery on their fellow-beings. The names of an Alfred the Great and a Vincent de Paul are held in veneration, because they consecrated their will to their personal sanctification, and to the welfare of their fellow-beings.

And it is so with us. If we are destined to be of the number of the elect, we shall owe our salvation under God, to the right use of our moral freedom. If we are to incur the vengeance of heaven, it will be due to the abuse of our liberty: "Thy destruction is thine own, O Israel." In a word, our liberty is a weapon with which, like Saul, we may inflict a deadly wound upon ourselves; or it is a sword with which, like Michael the Archangel, we can conquer the infernal enemy and win our way to Heaven.

How are we to exercise our moral freedom? We should employ it, first, in resisting temptations and our vicious inclinations. We should be "as free," says Saint Peter, "and not as making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God," whom to serve is to reign. And Saint Paul says that we are the servants of Him whom we obey, whether it be God or Satan. "Whosoever," says

our Lord, "committeth sin, is the slave of sin."[1] What a degradation to fall from the sublime estate of free-born children of God to become the slaves of Satan! What a humiliation to cease to be heirs in our heavenly Father's house, and to become like the Prodigal Son, the hirelings of a heartless taskmaster! "Man, when he was in honor, did not understand. He is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like unto them."[2]

Our Savior told the Jews that the knowledge and practice of His precepts would secure for them true freedom. The Jews were indignant that their freedom should be called in question: "We are the seed of Abraham," they exclaimed, "and have never been slaves to any man." But our Lord replied that, though children of Abraham, they were in bondage as long as they were in sin: "Amen, I say to you: whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin."

Do not Americans sometimes talk in this way? We are free-born citizens and yield to no despotic power. But what will it profit us to enjoy the blessings of civil freedom if we do not enjoy the glorious liberty of children of God by which we are rescued from ignorance and can trample on sin? What will it avail us to be recognized in the public walks of life as free-born and independent citizens, if, in the circle of our own family and in the sanctuary of our own hearts, we are lashed as slaves by the demon of passion; if we are slaves to a petulent temper, slaves to lust, to intemperance, pride and vain glory, slaves to public opinion, the most capricious of all tyrants?

Who possessed the greater physical liberty, Herod on his throne, or John in his prison? Herod could move according to his good pleasure from

[1] John viii. [2] Ps. xlviii.

place to place; he enjoyed civil freedom. His will was law to others; he had the power of life and death over his subjects. And yet his soul was bound in the chains of an unlawful attachment. John's body was confined in a dungeon, but his soul roamed in unrestrained freedom through the kingdom of God that was within him.

Second—We should exercise our foral freedom, not only in repressing temptations, but also in pursuing virtue, and particularly by an entire conformity to the will of God. We should study and "prove what is the good and acceptable and the perfect will of God."

The perfection of sanctity consists in the love of God, for "love," says the Apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law." And the perfection of the love of God consists in absolute conformity to His holy will. Union of heart, of sentiment and of will—this is the closest bond that can subsist between the Creator and the creature.

Jesus Christ is the highest ideal of Christian perfection. He is "the way and the truth and the life." He came to teach us by word and by example. Now if there is any one virtue that our Savior inculcates more forcibly than another it is this: That our heart and will should be in harmony with God's will. "I came down from Heaven," He says, " not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may finish His work." He became subject to Mary and Joseph, the creatures of His own hands, because He regarded them as the representatives of His Father. In His agony in the Garden of Gethsemani He thus prayed to His Father: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou." Every fibre of His sensitive heart re-

coiled with horror from the appalling and humiliating sufferings that awaited Him. But though His feelings revolted His will remained steadfast, and again, after praying to be relieved, He added: "Not My will, but Thine be done."

What our Lord practises He preaches to us. He tells us that though we prophesied and wrought miracles in His name, though we converted nations, He will know us not if our heart and affections are estranged from God. "Not every one," He declares, that saith to me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven." He tells us that the harmony of our will with the will of God is the key that will unlock the golden gate of the heavenly Jerusalem and admit us to the fellowship of the children of God: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." And in that beautiful prayer which He dictates to His disciples, and with which we are so familiar, He bids them to ask that they may accomplish the will of God on earth, as the blessed do in Heaven: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

And in exhorting us to make the will of God the supreme rule of our actions, our Lord is echoing the voice of His eternal Father: "My son," says Almighty God, "give Me thy heart." He does not say: Give Me thy riches, thy lands and thy possessions, for these belong to Him already: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein." He does not say: My son, give me the service of thy body, for that also belongs to Him: "Thy hands," says the Prophet, "have made and fashioned me." And besides, we readily bestow the service of our

brain and hands on one who has already gained our affections. But He says: Give Me thy heart and the affections of thy will, for this is all that you can call your own; this is the only free, unmortgaged property you can offer Him.

If you lay on the altar a gift of gold, or silver, or precious vestments, you make to Him an agreeable offering. But if you lay on the altar a heart subdued and attuned to the will of God, you make the most acceptable offering that a creature can present to his Creator. "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit. An humble and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." And should you withdraw from the altar or from the hand of the poor a gift once made, you would be conscious of doing a great wrong. But is it not a sacrilege to withdraw from the Lord a heart or will you had once consecrated to Him?

But perhaps you will say: How am I to know the will of God that I may comply with His good pleasure? It is true, indeed, that God does not make a special revelation to any of us as He did to the Prophets of old. Nevertheless, he gives to each of us a clear and positive manifestation of His will.

First—God reveals His will to us in the Holy Scripture. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Dives entreats Abraham to send some one from the dead to his five brothers on earth. "Let him admonish my brothers," says Dives, "to avoid my sinful life, that so they may escape the torments I suffer here." Abraham replies to Dives: "They have Moses and the Prophets. If they will not hear them, neither will they believe if one speaks to them from the dead." You will, then, discover the will of God in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly in the Gospel of His Son, of whom He says: "This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him."

Second—God reveals His will to you by the voice of His Church and Her ministers, of whom our Lord says: "He who heareth you, heareth Me." Take, then, to heart the words that are spoken to you in the temple of God.

Third—God reveals His will to you every hour of the day by the voice of conscience speaking without noise of words within your heart. Scrupulously follow the admonition of this secret monitor.

Fourth—You should discern the hand of God in the daily occurrences of life. You should regard all the events happening to you, such as poverty and wealth, sickness and health, life and death, and even the afflictions and persecutions arising from the malice of men—you should regard all these, I say, not as accidents and real evils, but as visitations controlled and directed by an overruling Providence. They are links in the chain of your immortal destiny; they will be so many gems in the diadem of your glory. This is the teaching of the Apostle, who says that "to them who love God all things work together unto good." I consider the recognition of this truth the highest Christian philosophy, and the practice of it the only substantial basis of genuine peace. You shall never enjoy solid tranquillity until you accept with composure and equanimity all the visitations that come from His loving hand.

Our Savior insinuates the same comforting doctrine. When He is arrested in the Garden before His crucifixion Peter draws a sword in His defence. Our Lord then rebukes him: "Put thy sword into its scabbard. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He does not say: The chalice which Judas and Caiphas and Herod and the Jews have given Me. No; He regards them all as the unconscious instruments

of God in the work of man's redemption. God used these vile instruments for the sacrifice and glorification of His Son, just as a father uses a scourge to chastise his child, and then throws it into the fire. "Do you not know," says Pilate to Christ, "that I have the power of life and death over you?" "You would have no power over Me," replies our Lord, "if it were not given you from above."

Blessed is the man who, in every occurrence of life, preserves in his heart an unalterable adhesion to God's will, through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity. Blessed is he who hears the paternal voice of God in the thunder of tribulations that resounds over his head. Happy is he who has this short but comprehensive prayer often in his heart and and on his lips: "Thy will, O Lord, be done!"

Whoever of you are animated by these sentiments are free indeed. Then in all your movements you will be guided by the Spirit of God. "And where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty." Then, indeed, you may be truly called the children of God. "For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Then you will experience a foretaste of that happy condition and unalterable peace promised in the life to come when "you shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

OUR DIGNITY AS CHRISTIANS.

ROM. VIII., 12-17.

IN this epistle St. Paul briefly points out to us our exalted dignity as Christians. He tells us that in being incorporated in the Christian family we become children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, and joint heirs with Him in the eternal kingdom.

To form some idea of what we are, let us reflect for a moment on what we were. To appreciate the lofty heights of dignity we have reached, let us consider the depths of degradation from which we have been rescued. The mark of Cain was stamped on our guilty foreheads; we groaned under the malediction denounced against our first parents. We were without God in this world, and without the hope of Him in the world to come. We were outlawed from our Father's kingdom.

Our crimes had made slaves of us. We groaned under worse than Egyptian bondage, because the chains were riveted to our souls. Such was our condition, or rather such would have been our condition had no Redeemer come to ransom us.

But "when the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of woman, that He might redeem us, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Thus, by one stroke of Divine clemency, a threefold blessing is conferred upon us; our guilt is removed; the chains of slavery are stricken from our feet; and we are adopted into the family

of God, to enjoy the glorious liberty of children of God. "Behold," cries out St. John, "what manner of charity the Father hath for us, that we should be, and should be called the children of God. Dearly beloved," he continues, "we are now the children of God, and when He will appear, we shall be like unto Him, because we shall see Him as He is."

St. Augustin in his "City of God," says that many rulers and heroes of Pagan antiquity desired to impress upon their subjects, as well as upon themselves, the conviction that they were descended from the gods, so that they might command the esteem and admiration of the people, and that the consciousness of their divine origin might stimulate them to heroic deeds. Thus Alexander the Great, Scipio, Romulus and Caesar were popularly regarded as the offspring of the gods.

But while their titles were false, we can, with truth and justice, lay claim to the title of children, not indeed of heathen gods, but of the one, true and living God. When the world tempts us, when passions assail us, let us spurn the tempter, and say: I am a son of God. I was born for greater things. I am destined for Heaven. I will not be the slave of sin. Let this thought inspire us to heroic deeds. "And when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We shall be like Him in justice and sanctity, like Him in immortality, like unto Him in eternal glory and felicity. Just as the atom sparkling in the sunbeam partakes of the splendor of the sun, so shall we, basking in the eternal sunshine of God's presence, participate in His glory everlasting.

How much more affectionately does God treat us than He treated the children of Israel, though they were His chosen people. The Jews lived under the law of fear. They were governed by fear.

They were restrained from vice more by the fear of punishment than by the hope of reward. There are but very few instances in all the Old Testament in which the Hebrew people presumed to call God their Father. They addressed Him as their Lord and Master, their King, their Ruler and Judge.

"Not so you," says St. Paul, addressing the Christians of his time: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ—yet so if we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him."

In addressing our prayers to God, what name is more frequently on our lips than the name of Father? The name of Father is applied to God two hundred and sixty times in the New Testament, though the New Testament occupies less than one-fourth the space of the Old Testament. And what prayer is more familiar to us than that best and most comprehensive of all prayers, the "Our Father"? Like little children who run with confidence to their earthly parent, we can rush in spirit into the arms of our Father, and say to Him: Our Father who art in Heaven.

In being made children of God we become also the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. "Jesus," says the Apostle, "is not ashamed to call us His brothers." Would not we be ashamed to recognize a fallen brother, who had disgraced his family and his name by a dissipated life? How often have we grieved and dishonored our elder Brother Jesus by our sinful life! How often have we defiled that sacred image of our Father and His

Father which is stamped on our immortal souls! And yet Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brothers. Nay, He leads us to the waters of life, where those stains may be washed away, so that the image of His Father and our Father may appear once more resplendent on our souls.

The disciples of Jesus had abandoned Him; one had betrayed Him, and another had denied Him before His death. Yet what is the first message He sends to them after His Resurrection? "Go," He says to Magdalen, "and tell My brothers that I ascend to their Father and to My Father, to their God and to My God." Let us imitate Christ, and tear from our hearts every fibre that does not pulsate with sentiments of genuine forgiveness.

Jesus came down from Heaven to earth, that He might lift us up from earth to Heaven. He assumed our frail human nature, that He might make us partakers of the Divine nature. Though He is God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, consubstantial to His Father, by whom all things were made, yet He became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, that He might infuse into us the spirit of righteousness and immortality.

Angels fell as well as man. Lucifer fell as well as Adam. Still Jesus did not take on Him angelic nature, that He might redeem fallen angels, but He assumed human nature, that He might redeem fallen man. This thought did not escape the mind of St. Paul, who says: "Christ did not take on Himself the nature of angels, but He took on Himself the nature of Abraham." [1]

He made Himself a slave, that we might enjoy the glorious liberty of children of God. He became poor, that we might possess the riches of

[1] Heb. ii., 16.

Divine grace. "You know," says St. Paul, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich, He became poor for our sakes, that through His poverty we might be rich."

History tells us that Edward I., King of England, while fighting in the Holy Land, in the thirteenth century, was stabbed by an assassin with a poisonous dagger. His devoted wife, Eleanor, sucked the poisoned wound at the risk of her own and saved her husband's life. Christ has done more than this for us. He has extracted from us the poison of sin at the sacrifice of His own life. He died that we might live. "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins."

And coming among us, He does not present Himself to us empty-handed, like a poor relation. He comes laden with gifts. He has left us His Gospel to be a lamp to our feet, a light to guide us in our pathway through the pilgrimage of life. He has left us the delicious banquet of the Eucharist, which He has prepared for us and to which He invites us, saying: "Come unto Me, all ye who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you and give rest to your souls." "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

And, to control our wayward, wandering spirit, He plants in the midst of our soul the Spirit of truth, to steer our course amid the storms of life, as the compass guides the bark through a dark, tempestuous ocean: "I will not leave you orphans, but will send you the Paraclete, and when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall teach you all truth." "Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that ye are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God abideth in you?"

This is not all. Ascending to Heaven, Jesus is there our Advocate, pleading continually for us: "My little children," says St. John, "these things I write to you, that ye sin not. But if anyone sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the just."[1] We know that in the Old Law God was often pleased to spare His chosen people for the sake of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, His servants. If the Lord was so gracious to the prayers of His servants, what will He refuse to the pleadings of His only begotten Son, in whom He is well pleased? The blood of Abel cried to heaven for vengeance against his brother Cain. The blood of Jesus cries for mercy towards us, His brethren. He exhibits His wounds as so many open mouths crying out day and night: "Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people, and give not Thy inheritance to reproach."

But to crown your dignity and glory, Jesus is gone to prepare a place for you in Heaven. Imagine the joy of the sons of Jacob when, after they were threatened with famine in their own country, they went to Egypt, and there found their brother Joseph, second in rank in the kingdom. They had sold their brother; they had sought to kill him, but he forgave them; he received them with open arms, and invited them to come and share in his riches and power.

Ah! my brethren, like Judas we have sold Jesus, not for thirty pieces of silver, but for the gratification of some base passion. Nay, we have crucified Him by our infidelity. He not only forgives us, but He invites us to His kingdom in Heaven, to share those blessings of which He is the Dispenser: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am you also may be."

[1] I. John ii.

What dignity can be compared to this? You will hear persons boasting of their ancestry. They will glory in being the descendants of kings, and emperors, and illustrious men. But how much more honorable is it for you to claim as your kindred and brethren the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apostles and martyrs, the confessors and virgins of the Church! How much more glorious for you to have, with the Saints, one common Father who is God, one mother, the Church, the same Brother, Jesus Christ, to have with them one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all!

To sum up: In being worthy Christians, you become children of God, brothers of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord is your advocate in Heaven. He is the Herald that will usher you into His kingdom, and you claim as your spiritual kindred those illustrious men and women who have reflected honor on our common humanity.

St. Paul did not fail to remind his new converts of these great privileges that they enjoyed: "Now, therefore, ye are no longer strangers and foreigners; but ye are the fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God; built upon the foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone."[1]

May I not, then, say to you in the language of Blessed Peter, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." It is good for us to be in Thy Church; for, in coming to the Church, as St. Paul says, "we have come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the Church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to

[1] Eph. ii., 19.

Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament."[1] May I not say to you, not in the language of exaggeration, but in the inspired words of the Apostle: "You are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a purchased people, a royal priesthood." You are a chosen generation, chosen from thousands of others who know not God. For, He hath not done alike to other nations, and hath not manifested His mercies to them as He has to you; "a holy nation;" for what people or nation is like to ours, that hath its God so nigh unto them as our God is nigh unto us? "a purchased people," purchased not with corruptible gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ: "A royal priesthood;" He calls you kings, because you are the sons of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; though you are outside the sanctuary, and not clothed in sacred robes, He calls you priests, because you are consecrated in your baptism that you might offer up on the altar of your hearts and in the sanctuary of your homes, the spiritual victims of praise, and thanksgiving, and supplicatation to your God.

Well may you say with St. John: "Thou, O Lord, hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation, and Thou hast made us a kingdom and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the earth." Yes, with Thy grace we shall reign over our passions, and greater is he who ruleth himself than the king who rules the destinies of a nation.

I said: You are children of God and heirs to His kingdom. Where there is so much honor and dignity, and so grand a prospective inheritance, there must be a corresponding obligation. But how often does it happen that a son after having been appointed by his father the heir of his es-

[1] Heb. xii.

tates, has forfeited his inheritance by his ingratitude and dissolute life! Children of God, be careful not to lose your heavenly inheritance by dishonoring your Lord.

Royal children of a royal Father, let your brow be encircled by the halo of royal virtues. "If I am your Father, where is My honor; if I am your Master, where is My fear?"

It is customary for students who have been attending colleges and academies to return home during the summer vacation or during the Christmas or Easter holidays, when they will recount to their father their trials and triumphs in the field of literature, and express to him their gratitude for the education they receive. They will gladly listen to his counsel, and will sit once more with joy at the family table.

We all are, or we ought to be, pupils in the school of Christ, preparing ourselves during this life of probation to receive a diploma of sanctity which will admit us to the kingdom of Heaven. Our heavenly Father invites us to return to this His house at certain times, particularly on the Lord's day, that we may lay before Him our trials, temptations and afflictions, that we may again listen to His voice and receive His paternal counsel, and partake of the heavenly banquet He has prepared for us, and above all, that we might express our gratitude to Him for the signal blessings He has bestowed upon us. Hasten hither on Sundays with as much eagerness as children return to the paternal roof.

I said you were brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Never dishonor your elder Brother. Never consent to any deed or thought of which He would be ashamed. Our Lord gives us the test of true brotherhood: "He that doeth the will

of My Father who is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister."

"Acknowledge, then, your dignity, O Christian soul, and having become partakers of the Divine nature, never return to your former vileness by degenerate conversation." Remember to whose head you are united as members. Remember that you were rescued from the powers of darkness, and translated to the admirable light of God.

"You were once darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk as the children of light."

"Ye were bought with a great price, be not the slaves of sin."

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE THREE TEMPLES.

LUKE XIX., 41-47.

THERE are three temples that have been sanctified by the presence of God, our Savior—the temple of nature, the temple of Jerusalem, and the living temple of the soul.

Christ our Redeemer sanctified the temple of nature when He descended from the bosom of His Father and became manifest to the world which He had created. On entering into this planet, the choir that greeted Him on the night of His birth were the angels when they sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

The first temple in which man ever worshiped His maker was the dome of nature, under whose mighty arch all mankind are assembled. It was only in this God-created temple that the human family gave praise to their heavenly Father for three thousand years, from Adam to Solomon's time. It was under this majestic vault that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob offered prayers and sacrifices to the Lord. It was under this roof of Heaven that the Royal Prophet received his inspiration to compose those immortal Psalms which have been the delight and consolation of all succeeding generations. It was while contemplating the works of creation that he uttered those sublime words: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament announces the work of His hands."

"O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is Thy name throughout the entire world!" And if we would gaze upon the works of God, not with the cynical eye of the agnostic or of the undevout astronomer, but in the fervent spirit of the Psalmist, we would, like him, "rise from nature to nature's God." Then all of God's creation would be a mirror reflecting His omnipotence. We would "find tongues in trees, and books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." Nay, we would find God Himself in everything, for with the Apostle of the Gentiles, we would be convinced that the invisible hand of God, His attributes, His power and divinity "are clearly seen, being made manifest by the things which are created." [1]

But alas! we walk the earth like thoughtless children who move through parental halls without recognizing the ancestral portraits looking down on them from the walls. We fail to observe the lineaments of our Father stamped upon the palace of nature which He created. Did we but contemplate the works of the universe with a devout spirit, we should behold the image of our Father suspended from the dome of Heaven, and marked on every star of the firmament, and on every leaf of the forest. For they all cry out with one voice: "Thou, O Lord, hast made us, and not we ourselves."

The second temple erected to the worship of God was the temple of Jerusalem. The Gospel tells us that the infant Savior was brought into the temple by His parents, to be consecrated to the Lord in accordance with the Mosaic law. At the same moment, an aged man named Simeon, devout and God-fearing, was admonished by the Holy Spirit that the promised Messiah was in His temple.

[1] Rom. 1.

Prompted by the same Holy Ghost, he entered the sanctuary, and instantly recognized the Infant Savior. And taking the Child in his arms, and filled with holy joy, he exclaimed in the memorable words which are recited by every priest in the divine office: "Now, O Lord, dost Thou permit Thy servant to depart in peace, according to Thy word, because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared in the sight of all nations, a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

If Simeon had not responded to the inspiration of Heaven, he would have died without ever contemplating the promised Redeemer. By obeying the secret voice of the Holy Ghost, he was rewarded by beholding in the flesh the Savior of mankind, and thus he enjoyed a privilege that was not vouchsafed to Moses or Abraham, or Isaac or Jacob, or to any of the prophets. Thus it is that every grace we receive is a link in the chain of our immortal destiny. Let us see that no link in the chain be broken or lost through our fault.

The same Holy Ghost that inspired Simeon to enter the temple of old has moved you to come to this Church to-day. The same Lord that greeted Simeon, welcomes you also. If you receive the hidden Lord into your hearts with as much faith and devotion as Simeon had when he received Him into his arms, you will return home with God's peace and benediction upon you.

The third temple in which the Holy Ghost dwells is the sanctuary of the devout soul. The noblest material edifice that ever was erected by the hand of man, from Solomon's temple down to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, is but a perishable monument compared to the temple of the soul

when it is illumined with the light of faith and adorned with the jewels of virtue. Even the temple of nature itself is as inferior in grandeur to the temple of the soul as matter is inferior to spirit and as time is to eternity. For when the great vault of nature shall be demolished, when the stars shall fade away, and the sun grow dim with years, even then the temple of the soul shall live and move and have its being.

Of all material temples, in contrast with the sanctuary of the soul, we can truly say in the language of the Psalmist: "They shall perish but thou shalt endure, and they shall all grow old as a garment, and as a vesture. Thou, O Lord, shalt change them, and they shall be changed, but thou, O immortal soul, art always the self-same, and thy years shall not fail." The self-same, indeed, in its essential nature, but how different in eternal destiny! The soul shall survive as a desecrated monument of God's wrath or reflect His glory for all eternity.

It is of this living temple of the soul that the Prophet Jeremiah speaks when he says: "Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them out of the land of Egypt. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel. I will write My law in their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be My people." [1]

I will no longer write My law on pillars of stone or marble, as I did on Mount Sinai, but on the fleshy tablets of your hearts. I will no longer, as of old, command you as I commanded Moses, to come up to Me on the Mountain, but I myself will

[1] Jer. xxxi., 31-32.

descend into the hidden recesses of your souls, and "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."[1] I will no longer fix My throne in Jerusalem alone, but I will establish My abode in every righteous soul. There will I lovingly dwell. "My eyes shall be open and My ears attentive to the prayers of him" that shall pray to Me from this living sanctuary. And as the faithful Christian recognizes the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle by the lamp that is burning before the altar, so are we made aware of the presence of God in the temple of our souls by the light of conscience that shines within us—that "light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world," that light which enables us to read God's law, and to discriminate between right and wrong. This law written in our hearts is immutable, and no priest, or bishop, or Pope can dispense from its imperative behests.

Not only do we read God's law written in our hearts, by means of that interior light, but we can hear the voice of the Lawgiver Himself secretly preaching to us. Who can say that he has not heard that Preacher, whether he is Christian or infidel, Jew or Gentile, civilized or savage, learned or unlearned?

Tell me: Do you not hear this interior voice of conscience every day, every hour, whispering to you in the sanctuary of your soul? At one time He commands, exhorts, entreats, and impels you to noble and generous deeds; at another, He restrains, holds you back, cautions you against the precipice to which your passions would impel you. Now He thunders in your ears words of condemnation and reproach. He fills you with bitter re-

[1] Isaias liv., 13.

morse, and denounces you as a wicked and unfaithful servant. Again you hear His sweet voice praising and commending, and diffusing through you joy and consolation, and saying to you: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

O brethren, listen with docility to the voice of the eternal Lawgiver speaking in the temple of your souls: "Today, if you hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts." If you feel bound to listen with attention to me who am a sinful man, with what reverence should you hearken to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit whispering within your earthly tabernacle! Say, then, with the Prophet Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

It is of the temple of the soul that the Apostle St. Paul speaks when he says: "Know ye not that ye are the temples of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? For the temple of God is holy, which you are." You observe that, on the principal festival days of the year, the altar is ablaze with lights, and is tastefully adorned with flowers. These decorations, as you know, are in honor of the Blessed Sacrament reposing in the tabernacle.

And is not the Holy Ghost also worthy of your homage? And does He not dwell in every chaste and devout soul? Try to be pure of heart, and the Spirit of God will dwell in you. Adorn the tabernacle of your heart with spiritual flowers, with the rose of charity, with the lilies of purity, with the violet of meekness and humility, with the evergreen of perseverance. Lay them on the altar of your hearts. Their fragrance will ascend as a sweet odor to the throne of the Most High.

It is also of the temple of the soul that the same Apostle speaks when he says: "If anyone pro-

fane this temple, him let God destroy. And what fellowship hath the temple of God with idols?" Once when our Savior entered the temple He found the money-changers there, and those that bought and sold victims for the sacrifice; and seizing a scourge He drove them from the temple, exclaiming: "My house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves!"

When you enter the house of God, my brethren, banish from the temple of your hearts all thoughts of trade and commerce, of purchase and sale, of stocks and bonds, of commercial and professional occupations. Above all, let your soul never be desecrated by the demon of lust, revenge, or intemperance.

It is likewise of this living temple that our Lord speaks when He says: "If anyone will love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him." Mark these words: "We will come"—the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. For where the Father and the Son are, there also is the Holy Ghost by concomitance. "We will make our abode," etc. God, it is true, dwells in the souls of all men—of the sinner as well as of the righteous, by His knowledge which is omniscient, by His power, which is omnipotent, and by His essence which is all-pervading. But He dwells in the souls of the just in a special manner, by His grace, His friendship and His love, and it is to this kind of presence that our Lord refers.

How unspeakably transcendant is your dignity when you are in a state of righteousness! You are honored by the true, real and substantial presence of the Holy Ghost. You possess not only the grace of God, but the God of all grace. You receive not only the gift of the Giver, but the Giver

of every perfect gift. Not only is the kingdom of your soul permeated by the aroma of the heavenly Flower, but the Root of the Flower itself is planted in your breast. All this we know and believe, though it is beyond our comprehension. We can only exclaim in grateful admiration with Solomon when he had finished the temple: "O Lord God of Israel, if Heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain Thee," how is it that Thou condescendest to dwell in this house of clay which Thy hands have framed and fashioned!

"Behold," says our Lord, "I stand at the door, and knock. If any man hear My voice, and open the door to Me, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." Christ knocks at the door of every heart, but how differently He is answered. There are some who absolutely reject Him, even as the inn-keepers of Bethlehem rejected Mary when she knocked for hospitality at the doors. "There was no room for her." There are others who give Him a temporary admission, perhaps after a mission, or a stirring sermon, or some grievous visitation of God. But His sojourn in these hearts is very brief. Other guests soon enter with whom Christ can have no fellowship, and He quits a place where He finds no welcome. There are others in whose hearts Jesus finds a permanent home. He knocks and they open unto Him. He sups with them and they with Him. They enjoy His familiar friendship.

God grant that you may be of the number of those who thus receive Him. May He sit upon the throne of your hearts. May He preside over your intellect, your affections, your memory and your imagination, and over all the congregation of your thoughts, so that you can say with the Apostle: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in

Me." May you never be divorced from Him. Say with the Apostle: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor pricipalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor might, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is Christ Jesus our Lord."[1]

[1] Rom. viii.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE VARIETY IN THE WORKS OF CREATION.

I. Cor. xii., 2-11. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all."

IN studying the material world around us, I have been deeply impressed with the fact that all the works of God are marked with the stamp of diversity and inequality. The Almighty never casts any two creatures in the same mould. There are no two stars in the firmament of heaven of the same magnitude and brilliancy. As the Apostle says: "One is the glory of the sun, another is the glory of the moon, and another is the glory of the stars, for star differeth from star in glory."

There are no two trees of precisely the same shape and proportion. Of the myriads of leaves that clothe the trees of the forest there are no two exactly alike. There are no two grains of sand on the sea-shore in all respects of the same form. If you take a microscope you will observe in them some difference of formation. There are no two days or nights throughout the year of absolutely the same length.

This variety in the works of God is a source of unfailing delight to us. What a dull, cheerless world this would be if all trees were of the same size and shape, and of the same color; if all days were of the same length, and if we lived in perpetual sunshine. After the night is over we wel-

come the birth of a new day. After the rain, we exult in the sunshine. When the clouds have passed away, and the storm has spent its fury, we rejoice in the presence of a serene, cloudless sky.

Passing from the inanimate world to man, we find that there are no two human beings identical in physical appearance. There are no two human faces alike. A close observation will disclose some shades of difference even among twins closely resembling each other. They differ also in dispositions of mind. Some are gay and cheerful, others are grave and melancholy. One is of a phlegmatic, the other is of a sanguine temperament.

There are no two human voices that emit the same sound. Stradivarius, with all his musical genius, could not make a dozen violins varying in tone. There are now seated before me more than a thousand persons, and every one of you has a voice so peculiar to yourself, that, after years of separation, a friend could distinguish you by your accent from the rest of the congregation. Nay more; of the fifteen hundred millions of people on the face of the earth, every one of them has an enunciation distinct from the rest of the human family. How wonderful, then, is the mechanism of the human voice, and how marvellous is the Hand that framed our vocal organs! What a proof that we are the work of the divine Artist, and that we can say with the Psalmist: "Thy hands, O Lord, have framed and fashioned me."

Ascending from the material to the spiritual world, we know that there is not only variety, but that there are also grades of distinction among the angels of Heaven. The angelic hierarchy is composed of nine distinct choirs. These are Angels and Archangels, Thrones and Dominations, Principalities and Powers, Virtues, Cherubim and

Seraphim. These angelic hosts ascend in rank, one above the other. One order of angels excels another in sublimity of intelligence, or in intensity of love, or in the dignity of the mission assigned to them.

And in like manner, God is unequal in the distribution of His graces to mankind. He gives in larger measure to one, and in smaller measure to another. To one He grants five talents, to another He grants two, and to another He gives one talent.

When the divine Husbandman hires the laborers to work in His vineyard, He recompenses those who labored but one hour as much as He does those "who have borne the burden of the day and the heats." The reward is altogether disproportioned to the toil. If you complain of God's discrimination, Christ will answer you in the words of the Gospel: "My friend, I do thee no wrong. Take what is thine, and go thy way. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will? Is thine eye evil because I am good?" What claim have you on My justice? Is not all that you possess, of nature or of grace, the gratuitous gift of My bounty?

St. Paul answering the complaint of his countrymen that the Gentiles were sharing in the spiritual heritage of the Jews, says to them: "O man, who art thou that answerest against God? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel indeed unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Is not God free to bestow His favors upon whom He pleases? May we not exclaim with the Apostle: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are His judgments and unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been His counsel-

lor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him."[1]

Again the same Apostle says: "There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit, there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord, there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all." To one is given the grace of ruling the Church universal, to another the grace of ruling a diocese, to another the grace of the priesthood, to another the grace of being a devout member of a religious community, to others, the grace of fulfilling the duties of the married state, and of bringing up their children in the fear and love of God.

And thus we see that, as in the firmament above us, "one is the glory of the sun, and another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars, for star differeth from star in glory," so also in the kingdom of Heaven, the saints and angels of God shine with unequal splendor, and are clothed with variety.

Nevertheless, among God's elect there is no jealousy or discontent. Those who enjoy a higher grade of bliss do not look with disdain on their inferiors. And those who are in a lower grade of felicity, do not envy those above them. All are happy and content, and praise the God of bounty for His gratuitous mercies.

And now I come to the most practical part of this discourse to which I invite your special attention. It is in accordance with the economy of Divine Providence, that in this world there should be, and that there is now, and always will be, disparity and inequality of rank, station and wealth in every department of human activity.

[1] Rom. xi., 33.

"Order is Heaven's first law; and this confest,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest."

The good order, nay the very existence of society, requires that some are destined to command and others to obey. Where this order is wanting, chaos, confusion and anarchy will reign.

To begin with the individual man himself, you have a head to which many members are united. In every sound body, the head, where reason sits enthroned, exercises supreme control over the members. By command of my head, my feet conducted me to this place. The head commands, my knees bend in prayer, my hand is uplifted, my tongue gives utterance to speech. If any member refuses to obey the head, it is a sure sign that it is in a diseased condition.

In every family the father and mother preside. The children and the other members of the household obey. If they rebel against parental authority, peace is banished from the domestic circle.

In every well-regulated city the mayor and municipal council rule. If their authority is subverted, sedition will hold sway.

The government of the United States demands that the supremacy of the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary be upheld and vindicated in their respective departments; otherwise there would be no stability, or protection of life and property. The army and the navy of the nation would become a huge mob and a menace to the peace of the country if the commands of the generals and admirals and subordinate officers were set at naught. The Church itself would cease to be the great bulwark of social order unless the legitimate power of the Pope, the bishops and inferior clergy were recognized.

The Declaration of Independence says that "All men are created equal." Few sentences in the English language have been more perverted and distorted from their true sense than this short proposition. Certainly it cannot mean that all men are created with equal stature, physical strength, intellectual endowments, or with equal opportunities. The obvious import is that all men are born subject to the same physical and moral laws of nature, that all enjoy the same air and rain and sunshine of heaven, that all are equal before the law.

As long as the world lasts, some men will be rich, others will be poor, some strong, others weak, some talented, others dull of comprehension. Some will be enterprising and industrious, others will be apathetic and indolent.

Suppose there were seated before me today a thousand young men, equal in age and sound health, and to each one were given the same amount of capital with which they were sent forth to embark in some enterprise and to seek their fortune in the world. If after a few years I were to call the roll and to investigate the result of these young men's mission, what would be the outcome? I should find that some had successfully climbed to the summit of the mount of prosperity and distinction; that some were still struggling upward and onward; that others had fallen on the way, and that the rest were grovelling at the base of the mountain, after squandering their capital. You might as well attempt to stem the tide of the ocean, or to force back the mighty Mississippi to its source, as to oppose this law of social inequality.

The most mischievous and dangerous individual to be met with in the community, is the demagogue

who is habitually sowing broadcast the seeds of discontent among the people. He is disseminating the baneful doctrine of socialism, which would bring all men down to a dead level, would paralyze industry, and destroy all healthy competition. The demagogue is blaming fortune and society, blaming the rich for the condition of the poor and the laboring classes. He has not the capacity to discern that, after all due allowance is made for human energy, this varied condition of society must result from a law of life established by an over-ruling Providence.

There is a tendency in our nature to chafe under authority. Thomas Payne published a well-known work on "The Rights of Man." He had nothing to say on the rights of God and the duties of man. A certain clergyman wrote a volume some years ago on "The Rights of the Clergy." From the beginning to the end of the work he said nothing on the duties and obligations of the clergy. The majority of mankind are so intent on their rights that they have no consideration for their responsibilities. If all of us had a deep sense of our sacred duties, we should not fail to come by our rights.

Let me now address a few words of exhortation and comfort to those of my hearers who are in a subordinate and dependent position, and who have to work for their daily bread.

Obey cheerfully those whom Providence has placed over you. Remember that all legitimate authority comes from God. "Let every soul," says St. Paul, "be subject to the higher powers, for there is no authority but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of

God, and they who resist, purchase for themselves condemnation."

Every one in lawful command, whether he be civil magistrate, or military officer, or employer, is clothed with divine authority, and is God's representative. In submitting to those set over you, you are obeying, not man, but God. It is this principle that ennobles obedience; for obedience is not an act of servility to man but of homage to God. Let your obedience be marked, not by servile fear, but by reverence; not by constraint, but by genuine affection.

Be content with your position in life. While earnestly aiming to better your economic and social condition, do not be devoured by disquietude and envy towards those who are more favored than you are.

Earthly happiness and real dignity do not depend upon the accumulation of wealth and honor. Socrates, one of the wisest and greatest of men, went bare-footed and bare-headed through the streets of Athens, and rejoiced in having no desire for those things that the world coveted. The Apostles were poor. They led precarious lives. Yet, "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy in the midst of their tribulations." "Having enough to eat and wherewith to be clothed, with these they were content." The Savior of mankind and the model of men had not whereon to lay His head; therefore it can not be dishonorable to be poor.

A word in conclusion to those among you who are in authority and command the service of others. Be just to your subordinates. Be kind and considerate to them, remembering "that your Master and theirs is in Heaven who has no respect to persons." Though wealth is a source of temptation, it is not an insuperable barrier to

righteousness. If judiciously employed, it may be a powerful agency for winning the Divine favor. Abraham was rich, and yet was most pleasing to the Almighty. He was the father of God's chosen people. Zacheus was rich, and our Lord singled him out from the crowd and became his guest. He blessed his household, and praised him for his good deeds. Many Christian kings and queens, though possessed of royal wealth, have been canonized as saints.

God has given you riches that you might use them in purchasing a home in His everlasting dwelling. Your noblest title is to be the steward of God. Never do you dispense your superfluous means more profitably than when you make them contribute to the comfort of your fellow-beings The most rational and enduring satisfaction a man can experience is found in bringing happiness to others. By your benefactions to a struggling brother or sister, you confer a triple joy. You give joy to the recipient of your gift, you give joy to the heart of God, and you bring joy to yourself. You possess a delight springing from the testimony of a good conscience. You will have a share in that blessing promised by the Psalmist: "The Lord will preserve you, and give you new life, and will make you blessed in the land of the living, and will not deliver you up to the will of your enemies."

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE STUDY AND IMITATION OF CHRIST.

MARK VII., 31-37. "He hath done all things well."

THERE are many roads leading to Rome, and there are many paths leading to the Kingdom of Heaven. Each worshiper has his own favorite devotion, just as each one has his favorite diet. Various methods are proposed for attaining holiness.

For my part, I am persuaded that the shortest and safest road to righteousness is found in the study and imitation of the life of Christ, as far as human frailty can imitate absolute perfection. Meditate on that life, and copy your Master as He is presented before you in the pages of the Gospel.

No matter how fast we run on the path of Christian perfection, He is ever before us, urging us on to the goal of victory. No matter how high we may soar into the regions of spiritual light, He is still hovering above us, inviting us to ascend higher, as the eagle enticeth her young ones to fly. No matter how valiantly we fight in the arena of Christian warfare, we find our captain in the thick of the battle, dealing and sustaining heavier blows, and cheering us on by His example. No matter how much we may endure in the cause of truth and justice, we find Him laden with a still heavier cross, and bearing deeper wounds. He sweetens the most unpalatable ordinances by the seasoning of His example.

Marcus Aurelius has left us many sublime moral lessons, but he writes with the coldness of a stoic philosopher. He warms not our hearts, he excites no enthusiasm. He holds out to us no hopes of eternal recompense. The beautiful maxims of Plato, Seneca and Zeno lose much of their savor because their lives were not always conformable to their words.

But we have no apologies to offer for our Master. He is exempt from human frailty. We need no mantle to hide His faults. He alone is above reproach, and can say of Himself: "Which of you can convict Me of sin?" He alone of all teachers can say: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When a Christian statesman, conspicuous for his civic virtues, as well as for the integrity of his private life, addresses the public in behalf of some political, philanthropic or economic measure, his words are listened to with marked attention and respect, independently of the intrinsic merit of his arguments and of the eloquence with which he enforces them. But let a demagogue or a time-server advocate the same cause, we will hear him with impatience or a smile of incredulity, because his public utterances are totally at variance with his private character.

This line of reasoning acquires overwhelming force when it is applied to our Savior. We admire, indeed, the beauty of His moral maxims, but their intrinsic excellence is enhanced by the splendor of His spotless life and matchless virtues, which shed a halo on His words.

Jesus never inculcates a moral duty that He does not practise in an eminent degree. He taught by example before He taught by precept: "Je-

sus," says St. Luke, "began to do and to teach."[1] We are drawn towards Him more by the charm of His public and private life than by the sublimity of His doctrines and the eloquence of His words. The sermons of our Savior inspire us indeed with an esteem for virtue, but His conduct stimulates us to the practice of it. Never did any man speak as Jesus spoke. As far as we have any record of His utterances, the most admired discourse He ever delivered was the Sermon on the Mount. But even the Sermon on the Mount yields in force and pales before the sermon on the cross. There we find eloquence in action, and if our Lord had restricted His mission on earth to the preaching of the word, like the Scribes and Pharisees, without illustrating it by the splendor of his example, He would never have caused that mighty moral revolution which has changed the face of the world; nor would He be adored today by millions of disciples from the rising to the setting of the sun.

When Christ was asked by the disciples of John the Baptist whether He was the true Messiah, He laid more stress on His deeds than on His words to prove that He was the promised Redeemer. "Go," He says, "and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

Beautiful above the sons of men does Jesus appear to me in His glorious transfiguration, when His face shone like the sun and His garments became white as snow; but far more beautiful is He to me when suspended from the cross. The crown of thorns is more comforting to my soul than the halo that encircled His brow on Mount Thabor. His naked and bleeding body gives me more con-

[1] Acts 1., 1.

solation than the splendor of His garments in His apparition on the Mount.

When we hear our Savior saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven," we are impressed with the sublimity of His teaching. But when we see Him in His infancy lying in a manger, and experiencing all the privations of poverty; when we observe Him in mature life saying of Himself: "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not whereon to lay His head," oh, then, we are made to feel the blessings of voluntary poverty, and we cherish and embrace our Teacher, who, when He was rich, became poor for our sakes.

When we hear our Lord say: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land;" "he that exalteth himself, shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted," we admire the virtues of meekness and humility. But when we contemplate Him holding Himself up as a model of humility, and saying: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart;" when we behold Him at the Last Supper laying aside His outer garment, girding Himself with a towel, pouring water into a basin, and washing the feet of His disciples, not excepting Judas, who was to betray Him, then, indeed, that virtue assumes for us special attractions. When we hear Him utter these words: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," we are delighted with His doctrine. But we are more profoundly moved when we witness His compassion for the hungering multitude in the desert, and His mercy shown to the penitent Magdalen, who was spurned by the sanctimonious Pharisees.

When He says, "If you will not forgive men their offences, neither will your heavenly Father

forgive you," He is clothing an old Commandment in new words. But when we see Him praying on the cross for His executioners, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," He teaches us a sublime lesson of forgiveness never before exhibited by sage or prophet.

When we listen to these words, "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake," we are in admiration at His doctrine.

But when we behold the innocent Lamb of God led as a felon from one tribunal to another, led from Annas to Caiphas, from Caiphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod; when we see the Judge of the living and the dead standing as a culprit before His own creatures; when we see the Incarnate Wisdom derided as a fool; when we contemplate the King of glory accused of being a blasphemer; when we see the Lord of the Sabbath charged with being a Sabbath-breaker; when we see the Prince of Peace, of whom it is written: "The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not extinguish;" when we see the King of kings by whom "Kings reign and law-givers decree just things;" when we see the Prince of Peace accused of being a seditious man and a disturber of the public peace; when we see the God of truth accused to His face of being a liar, a hypocrite and an imposter, and submitting to these injuries and insults with heroic patience, we derive from such a spectacle, in our moments of sorrow, a flood of consolation and strength which no language can adequately convey. For it is delightful and honorable to suffer in the company of Christ. A burden which otherwise would be difficult and intolerable to

bear becomes light and easy with His example before us. And we are assured that "if we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him."

Study the records of the sages and philosophers of Pagan antiquity. How dwarfed they appear before the heroic moral stature of Christ! Read, for instance, the lives of Cato, of Brutus and Seneca. You will find them all counseling fortitude in adversity, and asserting that no man defending a just cause should be afraid to confront the sword of an antagonist.

Yet when the hour of their own trial came, instead of bravely submitting to death at the hands of their enemies, they committed suicide; and self-murder, in the judgment of all right-thinking moralists, is not only an act of moral cowardice but a crime against God and society.

Mark how these men pale before the King of martyrs! Though fully conscious of the tortures that awaited Him, he does not try to escape them by putting an end to His life with the sword of Peter. He confronts an ignominious death with meekness, without cowardice, with fortitude without ostentation, and surrenders His life in vindication of His doctrine, without any recrimination, but with a prayer of pardon for His enemies.

Let us consider our Savior in three different incidents of His life, which are most instructive to us, and which serve as an example to us when we are placed in similar circumstances.

First—Witness the conduct of our Lord in those hours of His passion which I have described. What firmness and constancy He displays under the most severe trials! What calm dignity and composure, what self-possession under the most provoking insults! What sublime silence under the most blasphemous calumnies! What a lesson

to us to preserve our temper when hard words are said against us, and to keep down the spirit of resentment that would rise in our breast!

Second—Witness our Savior when He sees His Father's House profaned, when He sees the Temple of God changed into a market-place. Observe the indignation in His looks, and the fire of holy wrath that flashes in His eyes, when single-handed He seizes a scourge and drives the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, saying to them: "My house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." Learn from this example that no matter what you may personally endure you must always be zealous for God's rights, true to justice and conscience. Learn never to compound with sin, but to set your face against every species of corruption, whether it lurks at home or stalks abroad in social or political life.

Third—Now contemplate our Savior at the tomb of Lazarus. See how the Lion in the Temple is transformed into a Lamb at the tomb; how the Lion among the money-changers becomes a Lamb among the mourners. The eye that flashed with indignation in the Temple melts with tears at the grave of a friend.

The Gospel tells us that when Jesus stood at the tomb of Lazarus he wept. I never read in the Gospels that Jesus laughed, but I read more than once that He wept. And yet the tears of Jesus have brought more joy and consolation to the human heart than all the mirth-provoking books that were ever written. Jesus wept to teach us that He had a human heart as well as a divine personality.

This incident suggests to us an important truth, viz., that the most delicate sensibility is not incompatible with the most sturdy manhood; nay, it

teaches us more, that tender sympathy and emotion are essential to true manhood. The courage of the man is not the courage of the brute. The man that has gone down into the human heart and sounded the depths of its sorrows, and sympathizes with its sufferings in others, as Christ has done, is best fitted to bear his own cross when the hand of adversity presses heavily upon him.

If you would, then, be perfect, my brethren, study and imitate the life of Christ as it is presented to you in the pages of the Gospel. "Look and do according to the pattern which was shown you on the Mount," that contemplating your Savior, you may admire Him; admiring Him, you may love Him; loving Him, you may embrace Him; embracing, you may imitate Him, and thus you will become more conformable to that heavenly Model who is "the splendor of God's glory and the figure of His substance." Make yourself familiar with the words and deeds of your Master, by the frequent perusal of the Gospels. The Gospels contain the best narrative of Christ, because they are inspired, and are not diluted by human speculation. Christ will be your light in darkness; He will be your companion in solitude, your rest in weariness of spirit. He will be your Teacher in doubt, your Physician in sickness of heart, your strength in weakness, your joy and consolation in sorrow and affliction. He will be your life in death. "Follow Me," He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GRANDEUR AND UTILITY OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

II. Cor. III., 4-9. "If the ministry of condemnation is glory, much more the ministry of justice aboundeth in glory."

YOU have assembled today, dearly beloved brethren, to witness two of the most august rites of the Catholic Church, the consecration of this beautiful temple* to Almighty God, and the celebration of a Pontifical High Mass. An outsider on observing these ceremonies, might be tempted to say (as has been said before) that there is too much formalism in our public worship. But to the practised eye of the intelligent Catholic there is not a single meaningless ceremony in our public liturgy. Every one of them is full of sacred and solemn significance.

If you look at a stained-glass window from the outside of a church, it appears to you unsightly and grotesque, without form or beauty. It conveys no meaning to your mind. But if you view the same window from within, how rich and beautiful it appears, especially when the sunlight of heaven is shining upon it! How it embellishes the church, and how admirably the group of figures is calculated to illustrate some scene of Scripture or of ecclesiastical history! In like manner, a stranger to our religion regards our ceremonies as vain and meaningless, because he sees no relation between the rites performed and the mystery which they symbolize; but the same ceremonies viewed by an intelligent member of the Church fill his soul with

* Preached at the consecration of the Philadelphia Cathedral.

delight, because they illumine some mystery and illustrate some truth of revelation.

I shall begin with an important declaration which is always to be held in view—that all true devotion, all devotion to be acceptable to God, must be interior, and must come from the heart, for, "the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father, indeed, seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." All religion that lacks this interior spirit, is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

Almighty God reproached the Hebrew people because they had no heart in their prayers. "This people," He says, "draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from Me." And again He says: "To what purpose do you offer Me the multitude of your victims? . . . Offer sacrifice no more in vain. Incense is an abomination to me. The new moons and the Sabbath and other festivals I will not abide." But if God rejected their Sabbath it was because it had degenerated into a day of rigid exterior decorum without the soul of joyous piety; if He condemned their public prayers, it was because they did not come from their heart, and He disapproved of their exterior sacrifice because it was not accompanied by the interior sacrifice of a penitent spirit.

But while the essence of all religion is from the heart, the rites and ceremonies that are enjoined in our public worship are not only useful but necessary; they are imperatively demanded by the constitution of our nature; and hence they were sanctioned by God in the Old Law, and are approved by our Savior in the New Law.

The angels being pure spirits without a body, render to God a purely spiritual worship. The physical world around us—the sun and moon and stars of heaven, being composed of matter without spirit, pay to God a kind of external homage. And hence the royal Prophet cries out: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament announceth the work of His hands." And another prophet exclaims: "Sun and moon, bless the Lord; stars of heaven, bless the Lord; mountains and hills, bless the Lord; all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all forever."

But man, by possessing a soul, or spiritual substance, partakes of the nature of angels, and by possessing a material body partakes of the nature of the physical world about him. It is, therefore, man's privilege, as well as his duty, to pay to his Maker the homage of His soul and of his body, or to render to Him an internal and external worship.

The fire of devotion, like material fire, is an active principle. It manifests itself by a glow upon the countenance; it bursts forth spontaneously into words of praise, thanksgiving and supplication; for "from the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." And as interior piety finds its expression in outward acts of religion, so does public worship serve like fuel to feed the flame of interior devotion. They mutually act and react upon each other. The fruit of a tree does not consist of the bark, or the branches, or the leaves. Nevertheless, you have never seen a tree bearing fruit that was not clothed with bark, adorned with branches and covered with leaves. These serve to foster and shelter the fruit. In like manner, though the fruit of devotion does not consist of external acts of religion, they are necessary, however, to foster

and nourish interior piety. There is as close a connection between interior devotion and public worship as there is between the fruit and the leaves of a tree.

I appeal to any father of an affectionate family in this congregation. Will your children be content with burying their love for you in their heart? No; but they will show their love by embracing and caressing you. They will take delight in conversing with you, and be eager to serve you. And when your birthday, or the anniversary of your marriage comes around, they will surprise you by some gift, and will joyfully sit around you at the festive board. And so will the child of God manifest his love for his heavenly Father in a thousand ways. He will speak to Him in words of praise and thanksgiving. He will publicly honor Him on the Lord's day, which is consecrated to His service, and will be glad to partake of the Eucharist at the banquet of love.

Show me the man who devoutly makes the sign of the cross, who on bended knees daily prays to his Maker, who is faithful in assisting at the public services of the Church, who regularly receives the Sacraments, who diligently complies with the other official duties of religion, and who contributes, according to his means, to the cause of charity and piety, and I will show you a man whose heart is most probably right with God; not because these and other external acts constitute the essence of piey, but because they are the aroma of piety; they are the fragrance of the flower. Show me, on the contrary, the man who never bends the knee to his God, who never assists at public worship, who never, or rarely, performs any external act of religion, and I will show you the man in

whose soul the spark of piety is very faint, if it is not entirely extinguished.

Almighty God regarded ceremonial worship so indispensable a handmaid to interior devotion that He prescribed, in the Old Law, in the most minute detail, the rites and ceremonies and ordinances which were to be observed by the priests and people in their public worship. What is the Book of Leviticus but an elaborate ritual of the Jewish religion? Who had a more tender piety towards God than David? We have only to peruse his Psalms to be convinced how his heart glowed with love for his Maker. And yet see how earnestly the royal Prophet advocates the solemn and festive praises of God! "Praise ye the Lord," he says, "in His holy places. Praise Him with sound of trumpet. Praise Him with psaltery and harp. Praise Him with strings and organ." And this you have done today, my brethren, in coming to this holy place consecrated to the Lord. You have come to praise Him amid the sound of the organ and the chant of the choir and of the ministering clergy.

David in the exuberance of his devotion, "danced with all his might before the ark of the Lord," girded with a linen ephod, and "all Israel played before God with all their might with hymns, and with harps, and with psalteries, with timbrels and cymbals and trumpets." And when Michol, the daughter of Saul, saw King David, her husband, dancing before the ark, she despised him in her heart, and ridiculed him.

The race of Michols has not died out. They are numerous today. They will have no ephods, or chasubles, or sacred vestments in the sanctuary. All joyous feeling and emotion must be suppressed. Some of them would even banish all musical instruments from the House of God.

But it were better to dance with David than to sneer with Michol. And if God was pleased with the Royal Prophet when, with joy and simplicity of heart, he danced before the ark of the Lord, He will surely look with not less approval on the priests and acolytes when they move in solemn procession, and bend the knee with reverence and love before the Lord of the Ark that dwells in our tabernacles.

Our Divine Savior came upon earth to establish a purer, a more spiritual and a more elevated religion than that which had preceded His time. And yet He was accustomed to associate external forms with His religious acts. After the Last Supper, He rose from table and chanted a hymn with His disciples. He afterwards went to the Garden of Gethsemani, and fell upon His face in humble supplication. And shortly before His Passion, He entered the city of Jerusalem in solemn procession, preceded and followed by a large multitude bearing branches of palm in their hands, and singing Hosanna to the Son of David. I need not tell you how faithfully we commemorate this ceremonial in the procession of Palm Sunday. It is true, indeed, that the rites accompanying our public worship are more gorgeous and elaborate than were those recorded of the primitive Church; but is it not quite natural that the majesty of our ceremonial should keep pace with the development of Christianity?

But where shall we find a ritual so gorgeous and elaborate as that which is presented to our view in the Apocalypse, and which is descriptive of the worship paid to God in Heaven? It pleased Almighty God to uplift the veil and to disclose to St. John a passing glimpse of the adorers assembled around the throne of the Divine Majesty in

Heaven. Angels are represented to us as bearing golden censers and offering incense to the Lord, "on the altar which is before the throne of God." And the elders are represented as laying their crowns of gold before the throne. And virgins, too, with harp and canticle, follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. And a great multitude whom no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, are standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice: "Salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb." And the angels and the elders re-echo the anthem. Wave upon wave of melody floats through the court of Heaven while they sing: "Praise and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, honor and power and strength to our God for ever and ever." How glorious is the pageant! How elaborate in detail! Surely there ought to be some analogy, some harmony, some proportion and resemblance between the public worship which is paid to God in the Church triumphant in Heaven, and that which is rendered to Him in the Church militant on earth. And where shall we find this resemblance so strikingly exhibited as in the solemn service of today?

Witness that stranger who has come to your city, perhaps from Germany, or from the mountains of Switzerland. It is Sunday morning; he is walking your streets when he hears the sound of your Cathedral bell. What hallowed associations it arouses in his memory! He accepts its voice as an invitation to prayer. He sees the cross-crowned dome, and the cross speaks to his heart. And entering your Cathedral, while tears run down his sun-burned cheeks, he exclaims: "How

lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. For, the sparrow hath found herself a nest, and the turtle dove a home. Thy altars are my home, my King and my God." Looking around him, he observes the paintings of the saints, and of the Lord of saints, whom he was accustomed to venerate at home. He sees the baptismal font, which reminds him of the sacred font where he was regenerated in baptism, and of the days of his baptismal innocence, and the words of the Psalmist rush spontaneously to his mind: "I will go to the altar of God to God who rejoiceth my youth." He sees the confessionals, which recall to his mind the place where he was accustomed to kneel at the feet of the Lord's anointed, and hear those saving words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." He sees the altar-rail where he was accustomed to partake of the Holy of Holies. He beholds the altar ablaze with lights. He sees the pontiff and priests clothed in their sacred robes, those quaint old garments, so strange to him who is not of the household of the faith, but as familiar to the exile as his mother's face. He hears the sound of the organ and the chant of the choir singing the joyful "Gloria in Excelsis," and the immortal Creed. He listens to the words of the Preface, that masterpiece of musical creation, so simple, yet so sublime, so familiar yet so soul-stirring. He sees a multitude of kneeling worshipers like himself, and he feels in his heart of hearts that he is in the presence of brothers and sisters who have with him "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all."

Although this stranger could not understand a word of our language, all these objects spoke to

him intelligibly with a hundred tongues. They spoke to his intellect; they appealed to his memory; they aroused his imagination; they addressed his heart and affections; they went home to his emotional nature; they soothed his senses and feelings. They preached to the whole man as God has made him, so that every faculty of his soul and every fibre of his frame was swayed by the sweet influence of religion. Such, brethren, is the power, such is the mute eloquence of Catholic worship. You may tell me that this is sentiment, that this is emotional religion. Well, be it so. Is not sentiment and emotion a component part of man's nature, and were not these endowments given to man to be exercised as well as his intellect?

The Catholic Church takes hold of man as God has created him, with all his gifts and attributes; she appeals primarily to the light of reason, the dominant faculty of his soul; but she appeals also to his heart, his imagination and sensibility, those lesser lights which encircle reason's imperial throne; and he who upbraids her for arousing these faculties, upbraids the Author of our being, who created them.

I congratulate you, my brethren, on the solemn consecration of this beautiful Cathedral—a Cathedral not unworthy of the Lord of Hosts, and most worthy of this great city of Philadelphia. And in erecting this church to Almighty God, you and your fathers before you have done honor to yourselves. For if it is esteemed a great privilege for the citizens of the United States to erect a monument to the father of his country, how much greater is the honor that redounds to you in erecting this noble monument to your Father in Heaven?

So great, indeed, is the prerogative attached to the erection of a house of prayer, that when it was

a question in the Old Law of building a temple to the Lord, the project was conceived by one king, it was carried into execution by another, and the temple was renovated and beautified by a third king. King David conceived the plan of erecting the temple; King Solomon carried the plan into execution, and King Joas repaired and adorned the temple.

The history of this Cathedral has some points of striking analogy to that of the temple of Jerusalem. As three great kings are associated with the rise and progress and decoration of the ancient temple, so three great prelates are identified with the founding, the construction and the consecration of this church. The venerable Archbishop Kenrick, a man like David according to God's own heart, laid the foundation of this church. After the saintly Neumann had gone to his reward, the building was completed by Archbishop Wood, who possessed no small share of the wisdom and foresight of Israel's anointed King Solomon. And your present beloved Archbishop, who commands your admiration by the charm of his eloquence, and wins your hearts by his amiable disposition, completes the parallel by adorning this temple like King Joas; and he has had the consolation today of solemnly consecrating it to Almighty God.

God grant that the blessing which the Lord promised to those who would pray in the temple of Jerusalem may be shared by all who shall worship in this church, and that the words which He spoke to Solomon may be fulfilled in you: "My eyes shall be open, and My ears attentive to the prayers of him that shall pray in this place. For, I have chosen and have sanctified this place, that My name may be there forever, and my eyes and My heart may remain there perpetually."

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THANKSGIVING.

LUKE XVII., 11-19.

WE are surprised and indignant at the conduct of these nine lepers, who failed to return thanks to their Benefactor when they were cleansed from their leprosy. But it is more profitable for us to turn our thoughts towards ourselves, and reflect that we also have been wanting in due thankfulness to the Divine Healer, after He has washed us in His blood and cleansed our souls from the leprosy of sin.

Gratitude to God is a most acceptable form of prayer. It has been called the respiration of the soul. As in every human breast there are two movements—the one that inhales the air, the other that exhales it after it has enriched the blood—so should there be in every soul two movements—the one receiving gifts from the Holy Spirit, which invigorate our inner life, the other pouring forth those gifts in the form of thanksgiving. Every blessing we enjoy in the order of nature or grace is a gratuitous bounty of our Creator; "every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."[1]

God has given us natural life. How precious it is! How delightful it is to cross the mysterious boundary that separates nothingness from existence, to spring from darkness to light, to breathe

[1] James i.

the air of heaven, to contemplate the starry firmament above us, to commune with our fellow-beings!

Life would be precious in any shape or form. It would be an unmerited gift if we were made birds of the air, or beasts of the field, or fish of the sea, or creeping reptiles; for even the crawling reptile clings to life and instinctively shrinks from death. But how inexpressibly greater is the boon God has conferred upon us in creating us human beings and the lords of His earthly domain! He has made us in His own image and likeness: "God created man in His own image."[1] He has endowed us with a sublime intelligence, with a free will, with an immortal soul: "What is man, O Lord," says the Psalmist, "that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast subjected all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen; moreover the beasts also of the fields, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, that pass through the paths of the sea."[2] That universal jurisdiction which He gave to our primitive parent is also our heritage. He repeats to us what He said to Adam: "Rule over all living creatures that move upon the earth."

We are indebted to God, not only for the life He has given us, but also for its preservation and continuance; for as only an Almighty Hand could have created us, so none but an Almighty Power can sustain us. Not only must we say with the Prophet: "Thy hands, O Lord, have made me and fashioned me," but with the same inspired writer we must exclaim: "If Thou turnest away Thy face, Thy creatures shall be troubled; Thou

[1] Gen. i. [2] Ps. viii.

shalt take away their breath, and they shall fail and shall return to their dust."[1] He is the life of our life and the breath of our nostrils. He is the invisible Sun that illumines our path. Every day we live, every breath we breathe, every pulsation of our heart is a fresh manifestation of Divine Power and a new expression of Divine mercy.

We are indebted to the Giver of every perfect gift, not only for the blessings we receive directly from Him, but also for the favors bestowed upon us by the hands of men. What are our parents, what are our friends and benefactors, but the agents of God's mercy, the stewards of His bounty, the instruments of His providence? Who was it but God that inspired them with sentiments of benevolence towards us? Who but He that implanted in the fathers' and the mothers' breasts that love stronger than death, that tender solicitude, that spirit of self-sacrifice for their offspring? You should be always sensible of even the smallest favor bestowed upon you by others. This grateful recognition is not only honorable and praiseworthy in itself, but it fosters charity, for your heart is enlarged towards those who befriend you. It also nourishes humility, for in expressing thanks you perform an act of condescension.

It may be asserted as a rule that those who are animated by a grateful sense towards their earthly benefactors for favors received will seldom fail in thankfulness to the Divine Giver. On the other hand, the man who does not cherish a feeling of obligation to those who have befriended him will rarely, if ever, express his acknowledgment to his Maker. We might paraphrase the words of St. John and apply them to this class of

[1] Ps. ciii.

ingrates: "If any man say that he is grateful to God, though he is ungrateful to his neighbor, that man is a liar and the truth is not in him; for if he is not beholden to his benefactor, whom he seeth, how can he be beholden to God, Whom he seeth not?"

Perhaps you will object and say you have little or nothing to be thankful for. Your lines have been cast in barren places. While others around you enjoyed robust physical health, you have been the victim of various diseases. While others have been honored and flattered, you have been ignored and despised. While others have possessed in abundance the good things of this world, you have been in straitened circumstances. To this I reply that we should thank God, not only for the temporal blessings that He sends us, but also for the afflictions and humiliations with which He has visited us. We should love Him, not only when as a Father He cherishes us, but also when as a Physician He holds to our lips the cup of sorrow and humiliation. We should kiss the Hand that strikes us, as well as the Hand that caresses us. For whether He smites us or fondles us, He does so in love as our Father.

It may seem paradoxical and hard to realize, nevertheless it is true that in the day of the Lord, when He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts—in that day we shall discover that we owe a heavier debt of gratitude to the Lord for the trials we have endured than for the comforts we have enjoyed. For how many more are drawn toward Him by sufferings than by consolations! What are the heavy rains of tribulation that fall on us but refreshing showers that quicken and nourish the seeds of faith in our soul, and make

them grow into fruits of sanctification? What are afflictions if patiently endured but the raw material out of which we can weave the royal robe that we shall deserve to wear at the banquet of the great King?

And yet, alas! are there not some of you before me today, who, in both auspicious and adverse circumstances, are wanting in thanksgiving to God? You do not show your gratitude in prosperity, but rather you are then so intoxicated with delight as to be oblivous to your Benefactor. You fail to thank Him in adversity, for the frost of tribulation congeals the fountain of grateful affections. The only time you feel disposed to make some pretense of gratitude is when you have some favor to ask or some danger to avoid, and then your sense of gratitude is a lively appreciation of benefits to be received.

But if we should be grateful to God for the benefit of creation, how much more beholden we are to Him for the supernatural gift of redemption. We should give thanks to our Heavenly Father that we were not born and reared amid the darkness of idolatry, but in a civilized and Christian country; that we were nourished by Christian parents, and that we live under the benign influence of a Christian civilization. Above all, how grateful we ought to be that we have Christ, the Lord, for our Teacher who "is the power of God and the wisdom of God," whose knowledge surpasses that of the Pagan philosophers immeasurably more than the light of the sun excels that of the flickering lamp. He teaches us not only by word, but by example also. He preaches to us not from the pages of the Gospel only, but also from the wood of the cross. He is not only our Teacher, but our Redeemer as well.

He has brought us out of the darkness of idolatry to the admirable light of truth. "Ye were once darkness, but now light in the Lord." He has rescued us from spiritual poverty, that we might be rich in grace and in good works. He delivered us from the bondage of sin, to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God.

If, therefore, we should be thankful for our temporal life, how much more for the supernatural life with which He has endowed us! If we should be grateful that He has sent His sun to shine on us, how much more that He has sent His Holy Spirit to illumine our mind and inflame our heart.

If we should have a profound sense of the Divine goodness in giving us daily food for the support of corporal life, how much stronger should be our obligation for the supersubstantial Bread of the Eucharist that is given us for the nourishment of our soul! If we should be thankful that He has given us dominion over the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, how much more grateful should we be that He has given us power to subdue those more voracious monsters and birds of prey—namely, our passions! If, in a word, we are indebted to our Heavenly Father for having made us lords of His earthly manor, how much greater is our obligation for having chosen us as prospective heirs of His everlasting kingdom! And all these blessings our Savior has granted to us out of pure love and at the price of His blood. He can truly say to each of us: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But even more than this Christ has done, for "when we were enemies," says the Apostle, "we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

There is no vice more hurtful to ourselves, more abhorred by man and more odious to God than the sin of unthankfulness. "Ingratitude," says St. Bernard, "is a parching wind that dries up the fountains of piety, the dew of mercy and the torrents of grace." "The earth," says St. Paul, "that drinketh in the rain which cometh upon it, and which bringeth forth thorns and briers, is rejected, whose end is to be burnt." Shall not the soul, therefore, that drinks in the rain of Divine grace and that brings no first fruits of thanksgiving, but only thorns of ingratitude be likewise rejected? Manhood has a peculiar abhorrence of ingratitude. A man would rather be accused of profanity, or of cruelty, or intemperance, or lying, than to be charged with an ungrateful sense of obligation towards his benefactor. These sins may sometimes be palliated as resulting from a momentary passion or fear of confusion. But ingratitude always betrays a cold and treacherous disposition.

So hateful is this vice in the sight of God that it provoked His most severe denunciation against the Jewish people: "I have brought up children," He says, "and exalted them, but they have despised Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel hath not known Me. My people have not understood."[1] The ox recognizes with affection the master that feeds him, and we are indifferent to the Divine Hand that sustains us. The ox meekly submits to the yoke, and we grow impatient of the restraint of the Gospel. The ox ploughs the field which yields a harvest to his master, and we fail to cultivate in our soul the seeds of sanctification.

The Apostle of the Gentiles never wearies in

[1] Isaiah i.

giving thanks to God. In eleven of his fourteen Epistles he pours forth his gratitude for the spiritual blessings vouchsafed to himself and his disciples. And in every instance these expressions of grateful acknowledgment are found in the opening chapter, as if to admonish us that all our prayers and good works should be inaugurated by acts of thanksgiving.

The Church in her liturgy imitates the Apostle by the practice of thanksgiving. Our Savior was once sacrificed for our redemption on the altar of the cross. From the rising to the setting of the sun that great event is commemorated on thousands of altars by the Eucharistic Sacrifice which, as its name implies, is a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Embodied in the prayers of the Mass is the angelic hymn "Glory to God in the Highest! We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God, Father Almighty." And in the sublime Preface those words are daily recited or chanted: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is meet and just. It is truly proper and worthy, just and salutary, that we should always and in all places give thanks to Thee, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God."

It is a source of great satisfaction to every devout Christian that the Chief Executive of the nation, as well as the Governors of the States, is accustomed once a year to invite the people of the United States to return thanks to God for His blessings to the country. The public act of our Chief Magistrate proclaiming the supreme dominion and Providence of our Creator cannot fail to exert a salutary influence on our citizens at large, and to secure for us a continuance of Divine favors. Let each of us, also, beloved brethren,

be diligent in offering thanks to God for the individual blessings we have received, and then we may hope to be more abundantly refreshed at the Fountain of Grace, for the prayer of thanksgiving is a heavenly stream that flows into the ocean of Divine love and returns to us again in showers of benediction.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

SOLICITUDE OF MIND.

MATT. VI., 24-33.

THE heart of man is very appropriately compared in the Sacred Scripture to a restless ocean which is ever heaving and sighing, or in a tempestuous rage. It is ever in motion, never wholly at rest. Our heart is as much influenced by the breath of prosperity and the winds of adversity as the sea is swayed by the storms that sweep over its surface.

I do not pretend to read your thoughts, my brethren, but I venture to say that there is scarcely a member of the congregation before me who is not agitated by some vain hope or fear. Each of you has his daily round of cares, which flow and ebb like the tide. As soon as one care subsides another rises in your breast in endless succession. Those of you who are more favored in your temporal condition may be preoccupied by the rise and fall in stocks and bonds and the fluctuations in the market. Those of you who are in more modest circumstances are solicitous about your future wants for the decent support of life. Others are anxious about the result of a lawsuit, or of some impending event, on the issue of which you imagine your future happiness depends. Some of you, again, are fretful and uneasy regarding your own health, or about the recovery of a sick friend or of a member of your household.

Now, the religion of Christ, which was established to prepare us for future bliss in the world to come, contributes at the same time to our happiness in this life, as far as it can be attained in our present condition. And as cares and solicitudes are a bar to peace and tranquillity, our Lord suggests to us by His inspired writers and by His own voice the motives and means of banishing those cares, or of lessening their hurtful influence and of lightening their burden. If Christ will not subdue the storm that assails us He will at least help us to ride upon the waves of adversity, as He enabled Peter to walk upon the sea of Galilee.

St. Paul says: "Be not solicitous about anything (observe that he makes no exception of any cause whatsoever), but by prayer and supplication let your petitions be made known to God." Instead of consuming ourselves with vain fears, he exhorts us to lift up our hearts to Heaven for light and strength.

St. Peter expresses the same thought in these few but touching words: "Cast your care upon the Lord, for He will sustain you." Deposit the bundle of your solicitudes in the arms of your Heavenly Father. He will dispose of them.

But let me set before you the beautiful exhortation of your Savior on this subject in His Sermon on the Mount. "Be not solicitous," He says, "for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment?" He who giveth more can afford to give less. Can you imagine that God gave you life without making suitable provision to sustain it? He is not like a cruel tyrant who takes a capricious pleasure in torturing His subjects. Nor is He like those unnatural monsters which

are said to devour their offspring as soon as they are born. No. A God of boundless knowledge, He knows what is needful for you; a Creator of infinite power, He can supply all that is necessary; a Father of tender compassion, He is concerned about your reasonable wants.

We should never forget that God is our Father, "of whom all paternity in Heaven and earth is named," and that He possesses in an eminent degree all the fondness and solicitude that an earthly father has for his child.

I appeal to your own experience. Look on the years that have passed, with their long chain of hourly vicissitudes and varying incidents. Must you not gratefully acknowledge that your steps have been guided by a special Providence, "reaching from end to end mightily and ordering all things sweetly"? When did the great Dispenser deprive you of your reasonable desires? Or if you were disappointed in the direct object of your wishes, were you not compensated by blessings of a higher order? And if your Heavenly Father has been so thoughtful of you in the past, why doubt His protecting care in the future? It is time enough to distrust the paternal vigilance of Divine Providence when He begins to neglect you.

"Behold the birds of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?" Man, restless man, makes every provision for the future. He sows and reaps and gathers into barns; he is absorbed by worldly pursuits, and yet he is uneasy about the future. The birds neither sow nor reap and make little provision for the future, and that provision they make without disquietude; yet they perch on the branch and sing their even-

ing song of thanksgiving to God without any misgivings about the morrow. For they know by that instinct which God has placed in their tiny breast that the Divine Hand which fed them today will feed them also tomorrow. Now if God feeds the bird which was created for your use and pleasure, how much more you, who are destined to live forever and to be His co-heirs in the Kingdom of Heaven!

"And for raiment, why are ye solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They labor not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if God so clothe the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the fire, how much more you, O ye of little faith." Look at the flowers in your garden. How rich and variegated is their dress! More beautiful to the eye are the tints and shades of these flowers than the Tyrian purple with which Solomon was arrayed in the days of his regal splendor. Now if God gives so beauteous a covering to the flowers of the field which bloom today and wither tomorrow, can He neglect to provide suitable apparel for your bodies, which are destined to be transplanted and to bloom forever in the Paradise of God?

But you will say: I am discontented with my condition in life. I am devoured by the desire of possessing more affluent means. I wish to have a more capacious residence, better furnished apartments, a more elegant wardrobe. I would like to have a more ample fortune to distribute in the cause of religion and charity.

Almighty God, who promises to aid us in procuring the means necessary for our support, has not promised to indulge us in our luxurious tastes.

When the Prophet Elias was suffering from hunger during the famine that afflicted Israel the Lord did not send him to Israel's king, or to a wealthy family with whom he could enjoy sumptuous fare, and be clothed in purple and fine linen and dwell in elegant apartments. But He sent him to the widow of Sarephta, who appeased his hunger with all the food that remained in her house, viz., a cake of meal and water. We know not which picture is the more touching—the absolute destitution of the Prophet of the Lord or the generosity of the poor widow, who, in relieving the Prophet, became the steward of the Most High.

"Which of you," continues our Lord, "by thinking, can add to his stature one cubit?" What good will all this fretfulness and gnawing care do you? It will not add one inch to your height, or one ounce to your weight, or one cent to your wealth, or one jot to your happiness, or one day to your span of life. That excessive anxiety to which you yield weakens the intellect, dissipates the energies of the will and incapacitates you for the due performance of your duties, while an abiding trust in God enables you to work with a concentrated mind and a hearty good will.

Our Savior goes on to say: "Be not solicitous, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you."

Here is the most powerful argument against inordinate care. The heathens believed in the existence of many gods. Their gods, they admit-

ted, rarely took any interest in human affairs, but were wholly intent on promoting their own schemes and securing their own happiness.

It was not, then, a matter of wonder that the heathen should be solicitous for the things of this world, since he imagined that everything was the result of chance; that there was no God in Heaven to interest Himself in human affairs, and no future life to compensate the patient sufferer for the trials of this world.

But you have been taught a more consoling and a more sublime doctrine. You believe in the existence of a superintending Power that watches over the affairs of men and of nations. You know that the same Divine Wisdom that numbers and names the stars of the firmament counts the very hairs of your head. You know that the same Omnipotent God, who supports and nourishes the angels in Heaven, feeds also the worms of the earth. "God," says St. Augustin, "created the angels in Heaven and the worms in the earth." His omnipotence and providence are not more manifested in the creation of one than of the other.

In fact, what is this earth but a vast storehouse containing all things essential to the wants of man? If you look above you, you will behold the mountains clothed with virgin forests. If you delve into the bowels of the earth, you will find an inexhaustible supply of coal and other minerals. If you cast your eyes around you, you will see there valleys smiling with harvests of grain and fruit. What God said of old to Adam He says also to you: Rule over the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and over all creatures that move on the face of the earth.

But you will say: If God has such an eye to our wants; if His Providence watches over us,

may we not fold our arms, sit down idly and do nothing? May we not even squander what we possess, trusting in God to replenish our coffers? May not the capitalist hoard up his treasures and give no employment to others? May not the son of toil frequent the tavern, and read the papers all day and enjoy a perpetual holiday?

God forbid that, while you are admonished to avoid the extreme of solicitude, you should fall into the other extreme of idleness and improvidence. If our Lord points out to you the care His Heavenly Father takes of you, He expects you at the same time to co-operate with Him: "God helps those that help themselves."

It is true, indeed, that God feeds the birds of the air; but He does not deposit their breakfast in their nests. They must rise early to find it. "The early bird catches the early worm."

It is true that God crowns the mountains with forest trees, and enriches the bowels of the earth with coal and other mineral deposits. But it is equally true that this wood and coal cannot be of service to man without hard and patient toil.

It is true that God gives fecundity to the earth, so that it produces grains of all kinds for the nourishment of man. But it is equally true that before the crops can be utilized man must cultivate the soil, plant the seed, reap it and gather into barns. Christ multiplied loaves to remind us of the bounty of Divine Providence. He commanded the people to gather the fragments, to point out the duty of human industry.

The upshot of Christ's teaching is this: You should be active and industrious without excessive solicitude, diligent and laborious without anxiety. Labor today as if all depended upon your own right arm and brain; trust tomorrow as if

all depended upon the Providence of God. Use today, for it is yours; trouble not yourselves about the morrow, for it belongs to God; it is still in the womb of futurity and may never be born to you.

"Be not solicitous for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Do not derange the order of Divine Providence by superadding to the cares of today the solicitudes of tomorrow, which are often imaginary or magnified by the imagination. Like a skilful general, concentrate your powers on the formidable enemy that confronts you now. Do not scatter your forces by striving at the same time to encounter an enemy yet afar off, who may never approach you.

Endeavor to pass through cares as it were without care. While it may be impossible to prevent the mists of perplexity and anxiety from hovering about the imagination and clouding the senses, do not permit these vapors to ascend to the higher and more serene atmosphere where the soul is enthroned and communes in undisturbed peace with its Maker.

Remember that the moral Ruler of the world holds the reins of government, which He never surrenders. So long as He guides and controls the chariot that carries you and your fortunes, happen what will, you have nothing to fear, provided you put your trust in Him. "Hope in the Lord, and do good, and He will give you the desires of your heart."

"Be not solicitous about anything, but by prayer and supplication let your petitions be made known to God; and may the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

LUKE VII., 11-16. "Behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother."

GOD promised Adam that he and his posterity should not taste death forever, provided he complied with the Divine command enjoining him not to eat of the tree of knowledge; but he and his descendants were threatened with death if they should partake of it. Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and immediately the decree went out from the Lord, saying: "Thou shalt die;" and since then every child of Adam falls under the universal sentence expressed by the Apostle: "It is appointed unto men once to die."

Truly has death been called a universal leveler. It spares neither age nor condition of life. The most disastrous war will leave behind it some survivors. The most terrible plague will not carry away all its victims. The scythe of the mower will leave some blades of grass standing in the meadow. But the sword of death will not spare a single human being. No man can claim exemption from the law of death. "As by one man," says the Apostle, "sin entered into the world, and by sin, death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned."[1] Yes, we are all hastening to

> "The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
> No traveler returns."

Every sun that sets in the heavens, every clock that strikes the hour, every pulsation of our heart,

[1] Rom. v., 12.

warns us that the time of our dissolution is approaching, and is bringing us nearer to the brink of eternity. That sublime and prophetic sentence pronounced by Job about thirty-five hundred years ago is as applicable to our days as when first uttered: "Man born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is filled with many miseries. He cometh forth like a flower and is destroyed. He fleeth as a shadow and never continueth in the same state." [1]

How short is the span of human life! Day rushes on day, year follows year in rapid succession, till we suddenly find ourselves at the goal of our journey. The life even of a patriarch is brief, especially when viewed retrospectively: "The days of my pilgrimage," said Jacob, "are one hundred and thirty years, few and evil, and they are not come up to the days of the pilgrimage of my fathers." [2]

There is another circumstance that commands your serious attention. Not only must we all die, but our death shall occur only once: "It is appointed to men *once* to die." You have but one race to run, one battle to fight, one victory to gain or lose. If God had given each of us two successive lives, then, indeed, death might be relieved of its horrors and fatal consequences; for we might repair in the second life the evil we had done in the first, and we might win in the second campaign the battle we had lost in the former one. But you know, my brethren, that such is not the case: "In what place soever the tree shall fall, there shall it be." [3] If we die in the state of mortal sin, we are lost without redemption. If we die in the grace of God, our everlasting happiness is sealed.

[1] Job. xiv. [2] Gen. xlvii. [3] Eccles. xi., 3.

In a warfare in which everything is at stake—your fortune, your happiness and your eternal destiny, a warfare which is to result in a decisive victory or an irreparable defeat—ought you not to put forth all your strength? If the armies contending in the field were convinced that one battle would decide the whole campaign, how strenuously would they fight! Every available man would be brought forward to turn the scales of victory. So should you in this life, which is a warfare, exert all the powers of your soul. You should be terribly in earnest, so that when death came victory might be yours.

But if experience and revelation preach to us the certainty of death, they also announce to us the uncertainty of that event—as to the place, time and manner. Where shall you die, when shall you die, how shall you die? These are questions which no human foresight can penetrate, and which are solved only by the all-seeing eye of God.

Shall your death occur in the city or in the country, on sea or on land, at home or abroad? Shall your death occur in the spring-time, or in the summer, or will your grave be covered with autumnal leaves, or with the snow and frosts of winter. Will you take your departure from this life in twenty or in ten years hence, in one year, one month, one week, in a day, nay, this very hour? You do not know. But of this you are assured—that many a young and vigorous frame which has now as fair a prospect of a long life as you have, before the clock strikes the midnight hour will be as cold in death as the grave which is to receive it.

How will you die? Will your death be occasioned by a sudden attack, or by a long and lin-

gering illness? Shall the pangs of your last moments be alleviated by the company of friends and relatives, or will your eyes be closed by the rude hands of strangers? Shall the minister of God afford you the consolations of religion and fortify you by the last Sacraments, or shall you quit this world without a prayer for mercy being offered to the throne of grace in your behalf? Shall the angels of God attend your bedside, eager to carry your soul in triumph to the bosom of your Maker, or shall evil spirits hover about you, impatient to bear you to the region of darkness, "where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth?" In a word, shall you die in hope or in despair, friends or enemies of God, shall you die to inherit life everlasting in the Kingdom of Heaven, or eternal reprobation in hell? Thou alone, O God, who readest the human heart, canst tell.

But though no one can have an absolute certainty as to his eternal destiny, nevertheless as a man lives so he usually dies; and if we are now happily in the friendship of God, and earnestly strive for our salvation, this pious temper of mind and heart should inspire us with the blessed assurance that we shall be faithful unto the end.

I have said that death is certain, and that the time and place and manner of its occurrence are uncertain. Our Savior goes a step farther and declares that it shall overtake us when we least expect it: "At what hour ye think not, the Son of man will come." [1] He warns us that He will come as a thief in the night. Now I ask you, when a thief determines to rob you, does he give you any warning? Does he sound the trumpet before him to admonish you of the intended burglary?

[1] Luke xii., 40.

No, but he comes under the shadow of the night, when you are buried in sleep and unconscious of his presence.

And here let me make an important reflection which is worthy of consideration. Not only the weak and the old are liable to be surprised by death, but the young and the sound in health as well. Experience shows that those who are in the prime of life are unexpectedly carried away as frequently as the sickly and the aged. Yesterday one was crushed to death by the cars. Today a man is killed by falling from the window of a house, another is accidentally shot and a fourth is drowned.

And yet, is it not true that while we admit the uncertainty of life, as far as others are concerned, we do not bring the fact home to ourselves, but act as if we had a charmed life? We are like the inhabitants of Jerusalem who were admonished by our Lord that their city and temple should soon be destroyed. But the people listened with incredulity to the prediction. They observed with pride that the walls of the temple were compact, from basement to dome, that not a single stone of the sacred edifice was missing or out of place; the precious marbles which encased it were attractive for their size and beauty as they reflected the morning sun; no enemy was approaching the city or threatening to attack it; it was steadily increasing its proportions. But, notwithstanding these fair prospects, the city and the temple were demolished and not a stone was left upon a stone.

Is it not thus that you reason regarding the temple of your body? You look forward to a long life because of your healthy constitution and increasing strength. You apprehend no danger that the withering hand of death will soon be laid upon

you, since no illness assails you, but you are daily gaining in vigor and you smile at the warnings of God's minister. But suddenly, from some unforseen cause, this massive human temple collapses and is soon dissolved in ashes.

But, you may ask, why does God surprise us by death in this manner? Would it not be more merciful on His part and more beneficial to us if, instead of concealing from us the time of our demise, He would give us a timely notice, so that we might have leisure to prepare for our last end by doing penance for our sins? Ah, my dear brethren, strange as it may appear at first sight, it is just because our Heavenly Father is merciful to us that He keeps the time of our death hidden from our eyes.

For if God secretly revealed to you that your death would occur in ten years hence, is it not much to be feared that you would say to yourself: The Lord is merciful; one year's repentance will suffice as well as a decade to make my peace with Him? He can pardon ten thousand sins as easily as a single transgression. I will eat and drink and make merry for nine years more. I will have a good time. I will give loose reins to my passions. I will drink the cup of sensual delights to the dregs. And then I will give the last year to God and to the care of my soul. I can repent all the more easily, as pleasures will then pall on me. I will no longer have any relish for them. And when the last year came, your darling passions would tug at your skirts and whisper to you: Let us go on together a little longer. One month is enough for penance. Did not our Lord pardon the penitent thief on the cross? And you would put off your repentance to the last week, or the last day and the last hour, when God's mercy

would abandon you, the terrors of death would appall you, and the consciousness of an ill-spent life would fill you with despair. Hence it is clear that the Lord is exercising mercy towards us in withholding from us the day and the hour of our dissolution. The certainty of death, the uncertainty as to its place, time and manner, prompts me to set before you three obvious and practical resolutions:

First—Be always prepared to die. Strive to be habitually in the state of grace, and if you happen to be surprised by some moral delinquency be purged of the sin as quickly as possible; let not the sun go down on your iniquity. Make your peace with God by a sincere repentance. This is the admonition of our blessed Lord Himself, when He bids us to be ever in readiness to meet the Heavenly Bridegroom: "Let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands. And you yourselves like to men who wait for their Lord when he shall return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say to you that He shall gird Himself and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister to them. And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants. But this know ye, that if the householder did know at what hour the thief would come he would surely watch and would not suffer his house to be broken open. *Be you, then, also ready,* for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come."[1]

Mark how careful we are in temporal affairs. Men will insure their houses against fire, and will

[1] Luke xii.

not you insure your souls against the fires of hell? This temple in which we are assembled is insured against the accidents of fire, and we would be ill at ease if the assurance policy had lapsed for a single day without being renewed. And yet, alas! how many days you spend without having your immortal soul insured against the day of wrath! Remember that there is much more danger of your being surprised by death than of this church being consumed by fire. And it is not improbable that it will still be standing when we have all passed away. But even should it be burned the loss would not be irreparable, because it could be rebuilt. But once your souls are separated from your bodies, who can restore you again to life? Insure your lives by abiding securely in the grace and friendship of God, and then you can say with the Apostle: "We know if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in Heaven."[1]

Second—I would recommend you to look upon each day as your last, and each action you perform as the final work of your life. Nor is there any exaggeration in this consideration, for a day shall surely come which will not be succeeded by another, and you shall perform one act that will close the drama of life. If you took this practical Christian view of death, then would virtue flourish and vice decay. Then when the Divine Husbandman suddenly demands at the close of the day an account of your stewardship you shall not be taken unawares, but shall be able to present to Him a satisfactory record of the sacred trust confided to you.

Then, though your earthly career be brief, it

[1] II. Cor. v.

will be full of merits, and the eulogy pronounced in the Book of Wisdom can be applied to you: "The just man, if he be *prevented* with death, shall be in rest. He pleased God and was beloved, and, living among sinners, he was translated. Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased God, therefore He hastened to bring him out from the midst of iniquity."[1]

Third—Finally, meditate often on death. Frequently stand in spirit at the foot of your grave, and there you will learn to confront with equanimity the dread visitor when he knocks at your door. There you will be taught a lesson on the vanity of all things earthly. You will exclaim: "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity, except to love God and serve Him alone." This is the counsel of the Holy Ghost: "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."[2] Blessed are you if you are prepared by a life of righteousness to meet your God at that supreme hour: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching."

Death is the best of counsellors. It tempers the ardor of our feverish aspirations, reconciles us to defeats and disappointments, moderates the exuberance of our complacency in success, and teaches us to view with composure the lights and shadows of the earthly scenes through which we are rushing towards the shores of eternity.

How strange that mankind should have a superstitious dread of death, since it is as natural to die as to be born! And it is a sad reflection that the majority of even pious Christians shrink from the contemplation of shuffling off this mortal coil, though they know that they must be disrobed

[1] Wis. iv. [2] Eccles. vii.

of their perishable covering before they can be clothed with immortality. "Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting."[1]

Happier to the just man is the day of his demise, which is the dawn of bliss, than the day of his birth, which begins with tears and wailing.

If those sentiments were proper to a Hebrew writer, how much more appropriate are they to a Christian disciple to whom Christ has opened the portals of Heaven! Blessed are they who are so detached from earthly ties that they can say with the Apostle: "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."

Why, then, should you have a morbid dread of death, soldiers of the cross? Let the infidel fear death, who hopes in his heart that there is no God. Let the obdurate sinner fear death, who offends the majesty of Heaven by his sins. Let the slave of lust and avarice fear death, which will be the end of his pleasures and the beginning of his miseries: "O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions."[2]

But as for you, why should you dread death? Has not your Master said: "O death, I will be thy death?" Has He not conquered the King of Terrors by His own death and glorious resurrection? Has He not demonstrated by word and example that death is not the term of your existence? Has He not lifted up the veil and given you an insight into that bright and boundless realm beyond the grave? Why should you fear to pass through the gate which leads to the regions of bliss eternal?

With what delight does the prisoner hear the

[1] Eccles. vii. [2] Eccles. xli.

huge bolts of his dungeon door drawn aside, and listen to the messenger of the law reading the sentence of his deliverance! With what joy he bounds into the light of day and breathes the air of freedom and hastens to his father's home! And should you not rejoice in that day which will release you from the prison of the body, reveal to you the light of Heaven, restore you to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and enable you to enter the home of your eternal Father?

Live the life of the just, and then you shall hail death as the end of your sorrows and the beginning of your joys—as the herald of glad tidings, as the dawn of a never-ending day, and the door of a happy eternity.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY.

LUKE XIV., 1-11. "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?"

IN healing the dropsical man our Savior desired to convey to the world the consoling truth that the due observance of the Sabbath was not violated or infringed, but rather sanctified by deeds of mercy and compassion, and that there is no day of rest or cessation from acts of benevolence.

But while rebuking the Pharisees for degrading this beneficent ordinance into an intolerable yoke, the Lord of the Sabbath was not less zealous for the enforcement of this Commandment than of the other precepts of the Decalogue: For He "came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law."

Never did a merciful Creator establish a more humane law, or one more consonant to the wants of our nature, than when He ordained that one day in the week should be devoted to rest of mind and body and consecrated to religious worship. In promulgating the Sabbath and commanding the Hebrew people to grant one day of repose each week to their children, their servants and even to their beasts of burden, the Almighty reminded them in pathetic language how He had compassion on them by rescuing them from Egyptian bondage, when they were condemned to perpetual labor by their relentless taskmasters.

And we cannot fail to admire the wisdom of Jehovah and His intimate knowledge of the hu-

man heart in designating one particular day in the week when public homage should be paid to Him. For so engrossing are the cares and occupations of life, so absorbing are its pleasures and amusements, so gross and earthly are the tendencies of the human heart, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to direct its aspirations to higher and holier pursuits unless a special time were set apart for exercises of piety.

We have certain hours in the twenty-four assigned to the daily functions of life. We have stated periods for rising from sleep and retiring to rest, for partaking of our meals and for complying with our daily avocations. If we attended to these ordinary pursuits only when inclination and the spirit moved us, our health would be impaired and our temporal interests would be compromised. And so, too, would our spiritual nature grow torpid if there were no fixed day for renovating it by acts of Divine praise and adoration We might, indeed, worship God at irregular and spasmodic intervals, but we should very probably end by omitting altogether our religious devotions.

It has been the boast of our country that in no nation in the world is the Christian Sabbath better respected than in the United States, at least as far as outward observance is concerned. I have visited many of the cities of Europe, and I am persuaded that neither in Paris, nor in Brussels, nor in Berlin, nor even in Rome is there so great a regard for quietude and orderly tranquility on the Lord's day as in Baltimore and other cities of the Union.

But a close observer cannot fail to note the dangerous inroads that have been made on the Sunday rest in this country during the past thirty

years. If these encroachments are not checked in time, the day may come when the joyous peal of the chuch bell will be drowned by the echo of the dray and the hammer, when the Bible and prayerbook will be supplanted by the journal and magazine, when the votaries of the theatre and the saloon will outnumber the religious worshipers, and when the salutary thoughts of God, of eternity and the soul will be choked by the pleasures and dissipations of the world.

Look at the railroad lines in this country. Not only are passengers carried on Sundays, which I believe is unavoidable, but freight trains are in full operation; and this traffic involves the employment of thousands of conductors, engineers and firemen, as well as freight handlers, on the Lord's day.

Then observe our system of electric cars. These lines are in full blast on Sundays, and the conductors and motormen have to serve the same number of hours on that day as on week days. I admit that our city railways are a great public convenience, and afford exceptional facility for attending Divine service. But could not some means be devised that would enable employees to assist at public worship on the Christian Sabbath? There is no nation on the face of the earth more engrossed by mental and physical labor than the people of the United States, and there is, consequently, none more in need of the exercises necessary to counteract the influences that are hostile to religion. Let us view the average business man of America in our day. He is in a state of habitual feverish activity. He rushes through life with full steam, without once halting or slowing up to take his bearings on the voyage to the shores of eternity. The sole aim of his life is to

become rich. He does not make money that he may enjoy life, but he wastes his life for the purpose of increasing his store. Money-making is not the means, but the end, of his career. He increases his wealth, not so much from the love of it, as from the excitement and fascination attached to the accumulation of a fortune.

On Sunday morning, as he is debarred by the conventionalities of society from going to his place of business, he seizes the morning paper and devours its contents, of twenty or thirty pages, its news of stocks and bonds, of pleasures and amusements, or crime and scandal, until his whole being is saturated with this unwholesome diet. And then, like animals gorged with food, he spends the morning in a comatose condition. He afterwards partakes of a comfortable repast, without once entering the House of his Heavenly Father or invoking His benediction.

O blind and foolish Christians, who pamper the animal man and starve your higher nature, who feed on husks of swine and reject the bread of angels! Take heed to the words of Christ: "Not on bread alone doth man live, but on every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

You must all admit that the picture that I have set before you is not overdrawn, as far as a large proportion of the American people is concerned. Now the remedy to counteract this absorbing worldliness, to cure this cancer that is eating into the heart of the inner life, the antidote to allay this feverish, unhealthy condition of the soul, will be found in the refreshing and invigorating bath of religious contemplation in the House of God. Here in His holy temple is the living Fountain

springing up unto eternal life—a Fountain more potent to heal the distempers and infirmities of our soul than the miraculous pool of Bethsaida. For it is not the angel of the Lord, but the Lord of angels, that gives virtue and grace to these spiritual waters.

I will not stop to remind you, brethren, who are of the household of the faith, of the strict obligation incumbent on you to sanctify the Lord's day by assisting at Mass and hearing the word of God. But let me briefly set before you the immense advantages you derive from attending the regular services of the Church on the Lord's day:

First—In participating in public worship you edify your neighbor by your example, and you are edified by him in return. You stimulate one another to piety, and a spirit of holy enthusiasm and emulation is aroused among you. On the other hand, you are saddened and your zeal is cooled by the frequent absence of your neighbor from his accustomed seat in church. Over forty years ago, when I first ministered in this Cathedral, it was an inspiring spectacle to witness the leading members of the congregation, many of whose heads were silvered with years, surrounded by their children at High Mass. The father did not say to them: Go. But rather: Let us come to church.

Second—You have a thousand favors to ask of God for yourselves and the members of your household. What place is more appropriate for laying your wants before your Maker than His sanctuary? At home numberless cares rush upon you in the midst of your devotions. All your environments are a source of dissipation. You are distracted by the noise and prattle of your children; you are interrupted by the visits of strangers. But in the house of prayer you are

placed silently face to face with your Lord. You shake off for the time being the responsibilities of father and mother, of husband and wife, of master and servant, and you all appear as children before your common Father.

Third—Moreover, in united prayer there is invincible strength. Our Lord declares that "where two or three are gathered together in My name I am there in the midst of them." How much more marked is the influence of His presence when a whole congregation is assembled in His name? If a petition is presented to our Chief Magistrate by a single individual it may be disregarded. But let the people rise in their might; let them present a monster petition, then He will be constrained to hearken to the united voice of the citizens. God, indeed, does not disdain to listen to our individual petitions. Nay, He commends private and secret prayer. But more efficacious are the harmonious prayers of many hearts. Let our united supplications ascend to our Heavenly Father; they will sound like sweet music in His ears; they will mount like mighty waves to the throne of grace, and will be irresistible in their influence.

The Prophet Joel was sensible of this truth. God's wrath is aroused against the Hebrew people. The Prophet sounds the alarm. Instead of inviting them to pray at home, he summons them together to the temple of Jerusalem, saying to them: "Sound the trumpet in Sion, call a solemn assembly, gather together the people, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones. Between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep and shall say: 'Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people, and give not thine inheritance to reproach.'" And in response

to their united cries God promised them abundant blessings and deliverance from their enemies.

Fourth—The chief obligations that priests assume at their ordination are to offer up the Holy Sacrifice and to preach the Gospel. You are witnesses that these duties are faithfully fulfilled here, and, I believe, throughout the diocese, every recurring Sunday, from January till December. There is no interruption in our church services even during the summer months. The priest makes his appearance at the altar with such uniform regularity that the suspension of these functions would occasion almost as much surprise as an earthquake.

Now why is the officiating clergyman obliged to say Mass and to preach? Is it not because you are required to be present? The duties of the priest to preach and of the faithful to hear are correlative. One duty implies the other. Suppose you came to church on some Sunday and found the doors barred, and you heard that the clergy were prolonging their slumbers or had gone on an excursion—you would be shocked and scandalized and many tongues would be wagging. And yet you express no astonishment and perhaps feel little compunction at leaving your pew empty Sunday after Sunday. The ministers of God are made of the same flesh and blood as you, and the ministry of the Sacrifice and of the Word was ordained for you as well as for them.

Fifth—Persons will visit the theatre amid slush and snow and spend hours in witnessing some tragedy that will charm the fancy, but will add little to the sum of their knowledge and will add nothing to the improvement of their morals. Now these same persons will, in inclement weather, absent themselves from the House of God where the

awful tragedy of the Crucifixion is commemorated—a tragedy which has revolutionized the moral world, which assuages our sorrow and quickens our religious and moral sense.

Sixth—How many thousands of people of both sexes will sit or stand on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington on a cold, bleak day in March, patiently waiting to see the President and his cortege moving up the avenue on Inauguration Day. They witness the pageant at the risk, and sometimes at the sacrifice, of their lives. How many Christians are indifferent about being present under the shelter of the temple of God, when Jesus Christ, the Lord of Hosts and Ruler of Presidents, is passing by, dispensing benedictions to those around Him! Why is this? Is it because Inauguration Day occurs but once in four years, while Christ's blessing can be obtained in church every Sunday? But surely the gift of God is not lessened in value because it can be easily obtained. The benefit of air and sunshine is not less precious because it is abundantly bestowed.

Seventh—Men, and even frail women, will cross the ocean, journeying thousands of miles, subjecting themselves to the misery of sea-sickness and other tribulations incident to travel, and all for the pleasure of sight-seeing. They will make pilgrimages to the Holy Land, which was once sanctified by the footprints of our blessed Redeemer. And yet they will exempt themselves, on some slight pretext, from visiting His temple, where He habitually dwells. Here is Bethlehem, where He is born for you in the morning sacrifice. Here is Nazareth, where He abides. Here is Calvary, where He is daily immolated for you.

Oh! my brethren, if men will roam around the world for pleasure and gain, should not we gladly

walk a few blocks from a solemn sense of religious duty? For our sakes Christ came down from Heaven to earth. For our sakes He traversed up and down Judea and Galilee, always on foot. When He sat by the well of Jacob He was thirsty, for He asked the Samaritan woman to give Him to drink. He was hungry, "for His disciples had gone into the city to buy meats." He was also weary and footsore: "Being wearied with his journey, He sat on the well."

Welcome, then, every return of the Lord's day with renewed joy. Hail it with as much satisfaction as a victorious nation greets the anniversary of its independence. Welcome it with as much delight as the children of Israel celebrated their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. For, on every Sunday we commemorate the triumph of Christ over death and our deliverance from the bondage of sin.

Come with as much eagerness to the temple of the living God as the Marys, with Peter and John, hastened on Resurrection Day to His sepulchre: "Come, let us adore and fall down and weep before the Lord that made us. For He is the Lord our God and we are His people, the sheep of His fold."

You are all thirsting for happiness. Do not hope to assuage your thirst at the cisterns of sensual gratification—broken cisterns which hold no water of genuine consolation. You are all hungering for that food which is capable of satiating the desires of your heart. Go not, then, after forbidden fruit—Dead Sea apples which are pleasing to the eye, but most bitter to the spiritual taste. But come to Him who is the Bread of Life that cometh down from Heaven." You are longing to rest your weary spirits. Oh, then, approach Him

who says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you and give rest to your souls."

Take home with you the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "The children that adhere to the Lord to worship Him, to love His name and to be His servants—every one that keepeth My Sabbath from profaning it—I will bring them to My holy Mount, and will make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their holacausts and their victims shall please Me upon My altars. For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." [1]

[1] Isaiah lvi., 6, 7.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.

EPHESIANS IV., 1-6. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

"FAITH," says St. Paul, "is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." In meditating on the pages of the New Testament I have been again and again forcibly impressed with the frequency with which our Savior and His Apostles dwell on the blessings and advantages of Christian faith, especially a living faith which is accompanied by Divine hope and love. Indeed of all the blessings which a merciful Redeemer has conferred upon us in this world, I cannot conceive any gift comparable to the possession of a strong and luminous belief in a Divine revelation—faith in God and in Jesus Christ, an abiding faith in the verity of His Gospel message, and in the blessed promises of eternal life. I would not exchange a single article of the Creed for all the treasures of the United States.

First of all, your faith is a source of light to your intellect. Faith is to the eye of the soul what the sunlight is to the eye of the body. It broadens and expands our spiritual vision. Faith does not supplant, but rather supplements reason. It is the highest exercise of reason. You might as well suppose that a man dispenses with his eyes in using a telescope as that he discards his reason in using the instrument of faith. Faith is to you what the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of

fire by night was to the Hebrew people in the desert—it guides you through your devious wanderings in the desert of life to the true Promised Land of Heaven. Your faith gives you a notion of God as reasonable as it is sublime. It reveals to you a God who has created all things by His power, who governs all things by His wisdom, and whose controlling Providence watches over the affairs of nations as well as of mankind. It proclaims a God infinite in justice and mercy, infinite in truth and sanctity.

By the light of faith you acquire a correct notion of yourselves. You learn who and what you are, whence you came, and whither you are going. It tells you not only of your origin and destiny, but also the means of attaining it. It has rescued you from the perplexing mazes of doubt in which the heathen world had involved its votaries.

A Christian child, with a knowledge of his catechism, knows more about the great truths affecting his eternal interests than the most profound philosopher who discards revelation.

Your faith teaches you that you have an immortal soul. It, therefore, reminds you of your dignity and responsibility. Philosophers may cavil and dispute about the properties of the human soul, about its indivisibility and spirituality. But above all these metaphysical disputations rise in clear and unerring tones the words of Christ: "I am the Resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead. shall live, and everyone that liveth and believeth in Me, shall not die forever."

Archimedes, the great philosopher of Syracuse, spent considerable time in trying to solve a problem of physical science. At last his efforts were successful, and so great was his joy that he

ran about the streets of Syracuse exclaiming: "I have found it! I have found it!" If his delight was so great in having discovered a truth of mathematics, what should be our happiness in having solved the problem of human life!

But it may be said: Perhaps all these convictions and consolations are an illusion and a snare. Thank God, there is no illusion here. Illusions are shortlived and fleeting. They disappear before the strong light of investigation.

But the truths of Christian revelation have already successfully withstood the test of twenty centuries. During that long period they have been exposed to the seachlight of hostile criticism. The adversaries of Christianity have carried on a ceaseless guerilla warfare against the city of God, assailing one stronghold after another. But they were foiled in their attempts, and the only effect of their assault was to render the points attacked stronger and more impregnable than they had been before. The marks of the enemy on her battlements, like the marks of the wounds on the body of Christ, have made her more precious in our eyes.

When the clouds of battle passed away the Gospel message shone with still more luminous splendor. The brightest intellects in every department of science, and in every age and every country of Christendom, have paid homage to the Christian religion and thousands of confessors have sealed their faith with their blood.

Your Catholic faith gives you a just appreciation of things. It enables you to estimate them according to their true value, and to weigh them in the scales of the sanctuary. It teaches you to esteem the soul more than the body, Heaven more than earth, eternity above time. Your religion,

indeed, demands that you should diligently strive after temporal success in life, but it teaches that temporal prosperity should not be the sole and ultimate aim of our ambition, because it cannot fill up the measure of our happiness.

Tell me what would all the pleasures and honors and riches of this world avail you if you had no faith in a future life and bliss beyond the grave. Even though all the glory and wealth and sensual delight of Solomon were concentrated in you, and though your life were to extend to a thousand years, would not all be vanity and affliction of spirit if you were persuaded that all would be followed by death and annihilation? Sweet, indeed, are the pleasures of memory, but sweeter still are the pleasures of hope. The social and domestic enjoyments you now experience would be embittered if you had no expectation of an eternal reunion in the life to come.

Your faith not only enlightens your intellect, but it also comforts your heart. It brings you that peace "which surpasseth all understanding, that peace which springs from the conscious possession of the truth. "You shall know the truth," says our Lord, "and the truth shall make you free." O! blessed is that freedom that delivers us from the bondage of doubt and error.

You who are solidly grounded in Christian faith are happily free from those interior conflicts, those perplexing doubts, and that frightful uncertainty which assail the hearts of those who have no belief in Christ in this world, and no hope of possessing Him in the world to come. "They are ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth." You are not like those who are drifting on an ocean of uncertainty and carried to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and

never reaching the harbor of spiritual rest. You are not like others, hopelessly wandering through a trackless desert without compass to guide them or path to follow. But you are on that broad, high road described by the Prophet Isaiah, which is so plain "that even fools cannot err therein."

Oh, the wail of despair that rises up in the hearts of men who do not believe in God's revelation! Some days ago I received a letter from a cultivated gentleman residing in a northern city. He told me that his life was wretched because he had no faith in a personal God. "I have asked God," he wrote, "if there is a God, that He would perform some miracle—give me some sign to convince me of His existence. But no sign came. What am I to do?" I referred him to the parable of Dives and Lazarus, spoken by our Lord in the Gospel, which exactly fitted his case. Dives is represented as suffering the torments of the damned. He thus addresses Abraham, who is in a state of bliss: "I beseech thee, Father Abraham, to send Lazarus back to the earth, that he may admonish my five brothers to abandon their evil ways and so escape the tortures that I endure." Abraham replied: "They have Moses and the prophets. Let your brothers hear them." "But, Father Abraham," rejoined Dives, "they would be converted if some one risen from the grave were to appear to them." Abraham said at last: "If they will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be converted if one were to visit them from the dead."

Then I said to this gentleman: "You and I have Moses and the Prophets to warn us. We have Christ and His Apostles to instruct us. We have the luminous miracles and prophecies of our Savior to enlighten us. We have the glorious miracle

of His Resurrection set before us—a miracle attested by a cloud of witnesses. We have the abiding miracle of His Church daily confronting us. Hundreds of thousands, in every age, on the strength of these miracles have accepted the Divine mission of Christ. If this evidence does not suffice, neither will men believe, though one were to rise from the grave. For, if we do not accept the testimony of history, neither will we accept the testimony of our senses."

But it would not profit us to see the truth with our understanding and to love it with our hearts if we did not embrace it with our will. Your Christian faith gives superhuman strength and energy to your *will*. Faith is the armor in which heroes and martyrs are clothed. It is the heavenly food by which they are sustained. "By faith," says the Apostle, "the saints of old subdued kingdoms and wrought justice. . . . They had trials of mockery and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons. They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins, being in want, distressed, afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy."

No rational man acts without a motive, and the higher and more urgent the motive the more zeal and enthusiasm be brings to the execution of his moral obligations. The more precious the prize, the more earnest is the ambition to win it.

You all may remember the strong affection that Jacob had for Rachel. But Laban, Rachel's father, had an eye to business. He said to Jacob: You may wed my daughter, provided you spend seven years in my service. What impelled Jacob to yield his consent to the conditions imposed on him? It was his passion for Rachel. Do you

think he would have served so long if he had no faith in Laban's promises or in Rachel's love? Certainly not. It was this attachment that sustained him during his long term of service.

Some persons cannot understand how a member of our sisterhoods can consecrate herself to the service of the sick, the poor, the orphan and the pupil, not for seven years only, but during her lifetime. But I tell you these devoted virgins are not fools, or, if they are, they "are fools for Christ's sake." They sell their labor at the highest price. These words are ever ringing in their ears: "I will be your Protector and your reward exceeding great." And those words of Christ: "Every one that for My sake has left father and mother, and lands and home, shall receive a hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting." Where shall you find a nobler type of heroism than has been displayed by many converts to the Catholic faith? It is only the day of the Lord that shall reveal the exquisite sufferings and sacrifices they have endured for conscience' sake. Henry Edward Manning was filling a prominent position in the Church of England when he embraced the Catholic religion. Had he continued in the establishment in all probability he would have become Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest ecclesiastical office in the gift of his sovereign.

John Henry Newman, the greatest light that England produced in the nineteenth century, was the idol of the English people, and the virtual leader of a great church party. But, yielding to the voice of conscience, he stepped down from his lofty pedestal and became an humble priest of the Oratory. It is true that both of these churchmen were afterwards raised to the sacred purple. But when they entered the portals of the Catholic

Church they had no expectation or thought of the honor that awaited them. What was the latent power that energized their will and prompted them to take that daring leap? It was the courage that faith inspires. They "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of" England. "For they looked unto the reward."

Look at the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Read his life as it is depicted in his Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles. Had Paul persevered in the Jewish religion he would have been a leader in Israel. In becoming a Christian he was regarded by his former coreligionists as a fanatic and a madman for exchanging an easy and honorable career for a life of unspeakable hardships and misery. He is arrested in Jerusalem and dragged to Caesarea, and from Caesarea to Rome. He is brought before various tribunals, consigned to many prisons. He suffers hunger and cold. He is mobbed, and stoned, and scourged; he is shipwrecked and finally beheaded.

And now observe his cheerfulness and joy of spirit amid all these sufferings: "I rejoice," he says, "with exceeding great joy amidst all my tribulations." "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as needy, yet enriching many, as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

What is the source of his cheerfulness? What is the inspiration of his indomitable energy? It is his unclouded faith. He has a bright vision before him, of the glorious City of God which awaited him beyond the grave. "I have fought a good fight," he says, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of glory which the Lord, the just Judge, will give unto me on that day, and not

unto me only, but also to those who love his coming."

Again he says: "I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that He is able to keep my deposit unto that day." You observe that the Apostle, in speaking of his *deposit,* is using a banking phrase. He says: My deposit is safe in the bank of Heaven. In that bank there is no defalcation or repudiation. There will be no suspension of payment, no passing of dividends. He knew well that for every stripe he endured, for every humiliation he suffered, for every missionary journey he undertook, he should receive a reward a thousand-fold.

Your faith is to you an inexhaustible source of spiritual riches. It is your faith that unlocks for you the door of the new Jerusalem and admits you to a participation in its priceless treasures. For on entering by faith its sacred portals "you are come to Mount Sion, and the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the company of many thousands of angels, and the Church of the firstborn who are written in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant."

It is your faith that gives you a right to the Sacraments, those mysterious Fountains of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. You alone, who possess the faith, are entitled to sit at the banquet of the Lord and partake of the Divine Eucharist. Your faith is that pearl of great price mentioned in the Gospel, compared with which all earthly treasures are but dross. How precious is that pearl of faith which can purchase for you a crown of glory and a Heavenly Kingdom.

As the life and health of your body require that it be sustained by daily food and exercise, so do

the life and growth of faith demand that it be nourished by daily prayer and the observance of God's precepts. If it is not thus nurtured it will languish and die, for St. James says: "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without good works is dead."

"The just man," says St. Paul, "liveth by faith." I entreat you, dearly beloved, to live your whole life according to the maxims of Jesus Christ. Do not lead a dual life. Give not to God a divided heart. Regulate your business concerns, your private and domestic life, and even your politics, as well as your religious exercises, by the standard of the Gospel. And then you can truly say with the Apostle: "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me."

I pray with the same Apostle "that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, that, being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length, the height and depth of the love of Christ which surpasseth all knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God. Now to Him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we can desire or understand—to Him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, world without end. Amen."

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE TRIBUNAL OF MERCY.

MATT. IX., 1-8. "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

THE principal object of Christ's mission on earth was to restore fallen man to the friendship of God by releasing his soul from the bondage of sin. The very name of Jesus indicates this consoling truth. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," says the Angel to Joseph, "for He shall save His people from their sins."[1] For, if Jesus had contented Himself with healing the maladies of the body, He would, indeed, deserve to be called our Physician, but would not merit the nobler and more endearing title of Savior and Redeemer.

In the Gospel of today a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed, is brought to Jesus to be restored to health. Our Lord makes the healing of the body subordinate to the cleansing of the soul. He performs a miracle palpable to the senses, that He might win the confidence of the spectators, and compel them to recognize Him as the Physician of the soul. He says to the palsied man: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." Some of the Scribes said within themselves: "This man blasphemeth." And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said: "Why think ye evil in your hearts? But that ye may know that the Son of man on earth hath power to forgive sins, then saith He to the paralytic: Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose, and departed unto his house."

As much as our spiritual substance excels this flesh which envelops it, so much more did our Savior value the resurrection of a soul from the

[1] Matt. i.

grave of sin than the raising of the body from the grave of death. Hence St. Augustin pointedly remarks that while the Gospel relates only three resurrections of the body, our Lord, during His mortal life, raised thousands to the life of grace.

As the Church was established by Jesus Christ to perpetuate the work which He had begun, it follows that the reconciliation of sinners from sin to righteousness was to be the principal work of His ministers on earth. This commission is beautifully and concisely expressed by the Apostle in His Epistle to the Corinthians: "God," he says, "hath reconciled us to Himself to us through Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. . . . For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting through us."[1] That is to say, God sent Christ to reconcile sinners; Christ sends us. We are His ambassadors, reconciling sinners in His name.

I may remark in passing that the tremendous power conferred on us as ministers of God should inspire us with a salutary dread and a deep sense of our responsibilities, and leave us no ground for any self-glorification. Christ is the living Fountain of Grace; we are but the channels by which it is conveyed to your souls. He is the Treasure, we are but the agents that carry it, and "we bear this treasure in earthen vessels." Our words sounding in the confessional are but the feeble echo of the voice of the Spirit of God, that purified the Apostles in the Cenacle of Jerusalem.

As the power given by Christ to His Apostles to forgive sins was an extraordinary and unprecedented prerogative, it is set forth in such clear and unmistakable terms as to preclude any room for doubt or misconception.

[1] II. Cor. v.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew our Lord thus addresses Peter: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church. . . . And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven."[1] And to all the Apostles assembled together on another occasion He extends the same power in the same forcible language: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven."[2] The soul is bound and enchained by sin. I give you power, says our Lord, to release the penitent soul from its galling fetters, and to restore it to the liberty of a child of God.

And in the Gospel of St. John we have a still more precise and striking declaration of the absolving power given by our Savior to His Apostles.

Jesus, after His resurrection, thus addresses His disciples: "Peace be to you. . . . As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained."[3]

"That peace which I confer on you as the earnest of My love you will impart to repentant sinners as a pledge of their reconciliation with God. The absolving power I have from My Father I delegate to you. Receive the Holy Ghost, that you may impart this Holy Spirit to souls possessed by the evil one. "If their sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow, and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."[4] If they are as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore, they shall

[1] Matt. xvi. [2] Matt. xviii., 18. [3] John xx. [4] Isaiah i.

be blotted out, provided they come to you with contrite hearts. The sentence of absolution which you shall pronounce on earth shall be ratified by Me in Heaven. Let Me draw from these words of St. John three important considerations:

First—It is evident that the pardoning power given to the Apostles was not restricted to them, but was extended to their successors in the ministry unto all times and places. The forgiveness of sin was to continue as long as sin lasted in the world; and as sin, alas! will always exist on earth, so will the remedy for sin be always found in the Church. The antidote will coexist with the disease. The power which our Lord gave the Apostles to preach, to baptize, to confirm, to ordain was certainly transmitted by them to their successors. Why not also the power that they had received to pardon sins, since man's greatest need is his reconciliation with God by the forgiveness of his transgressions?

Second—It is equally evident that absolution for sin was ordinarily to be obtained through the ministry of the Apostles and their successors, just as it was from them that the faithful were to receive the word of God and the grace of the Sacraments. The pardoning power was an extraordinary prerogative conferred upon the Apostles. But it would have been an insignificant and useless privilege if sinners could always obtain forgiveness by secretly confessing to God in their chambers. Rarely would any penitents have recourse to God's ministers if they could obtain pardon on such easy terms. God says to His priests: I give you the keys of My kingdom, that you may dispense the treasures of mercy to repenting sinners. But the keys of God's treasures would sel-

dom be used if a sinner could obtain a ransom without applying to His ministers.

I have said that the pardon of sin is *ordinarily* to be obtained through the agency of God's ministers, because it sometimes happens that the services of a clergyman cannot be secured. In such a contingency a merciful God accepts the will for the deed, and does not require more than a hearty sorrow for sin, for His ordinances bind only those who are able to execute them.

Third—It follows, also, that the power of forgiving sins on the part of Christ's ministers involves the previous obligation on the part of the penitent of confessing them. The priest is not empowered to give absolution to everyone indiscriminately. His power is judicial, and must be exercised with prudence and discretion. He must reject the impenitent and absolve the contrite. But he cannot judge of the state of the sinner unless he knows his sins; the sins he cannot know unless they are confessed.

Confession seems to be demanded by the cry of nature as it is by the voice of religion. Do we not often read of criminals who have succeeded in eluding their pursuers and escaping the vengeance of the law, yet so incessantly were they pursued by a self-accusing conscience that they sought and found some alleviation of their misery in a voluntary surrender to the officers of justice? They were more tortured by the interior reproach of conscience which haunted them than by the prospect of a judicial sentence of condemnation. In avowing their crime they breathed more freely and shook off an intolerable burden.

If such an acknowledgment affords relief, how tranquillizing to the transgressor is a contrite confession in the tribunal of Penance, where he feels not the iron grasp of avenging justice, but the ten-

der embrace of a father welcoming a prodigal son.

What a contrast presents itself between the criminal courts organized in the land for the punishment of offences, and the tribunal of mercy established by Christ in His Church. In the criminal court all the proceedings are carried on in public. They are not only made known to the spectators, but are proclaimed to the world through the agency of the press, which lays bare the crime with all its harrowing details.

Witnesses against the accused are summoned from various directions. The victims of the criminal and their friends testify against him with unrelenting severity. If the accusation is proved, the culprit is condemned to death or imprisonment, according to the gravity of the offence. He is deprived of the privileges of citizenship, and is branded with life-long infamy.

But in the tribunal of mercy the veil of absolute secrecy envelopes the accused. His sins are declared only to the minister of God, who is forbidden to reveal them even under the penalty of death. The transgressor himself is his only accuser. No other witness can testify against him. He has no court expenses to pay; he has no witnesses to be cited; he has no lawyer to engage to defend his cause. His only advocate is Christ, and the only compensation He demands is an humble and grateful heart.

As soon as he contritely confesses his evil deeds, and says with David: "I have sinned before the Lord," quicker than the lightning from Heaven does God's message of pardon come to him as it came to David, when the Prophet Nathan said to him: "The Lord also hath taken away thy sins. Thou shalt not die." He is restored to the friendship of his Heavenly Father; he is reinstated in

Christian citizenship, and his lost celestial inheritance is recovered.

It is hardly necessary to add that the absolution given to the penitent does not exonerate him from making restitution as far as he can for any injustice he may have committed, and for repairing the injury he has done to his neighbor. The confessor, instead of relaxing or condoning the claims of justice, is zealous in enforcing them, though the restitution need not involve the penitent's exposure and degradation. I have been personally more than once the agent in making restitution to families and their heirs for acts of injustice of over twenty years' standing.

I may be permitted, dear brethren, to give the testimony of my own experience on the sanctifying influence of the Sacrament of Penance. Since my ordination, nearly a half century ago, I have been accustomed to hear confessions. I have, therefore, had a fair opportunity of testing the value of this means of grace. And the impressions forced on my mind, far from being peculiar to myself, are shared by every Catholic clergyman throughout the world who is charged with the care of souls. And the testimony of a few experienced confessors ought, in my estimation, to have more weight in enabling men to judge of the moral tendencies of the sacred Tribunal than the gratuitous assertions of a thousand individuals who have no personal experience of the confessional, but who draw on a heated imagination or on the pages of sensational novels for the statements they advance.

I am persuaded that the confessional is one of the most powerful moral levers ever designed by a merciful God for raising man from the mire of sin. It has more weight in withdrawing people from vice than even the pulpit. In public sermons we

scatter the Word of God; in the confessional we reap the harvest. In sermons, to use a military phrase, we fire at random; in the confessional we take a sure aim. The words of the priest go home to the heart of the penitent. In a public discourse the priest addresses the congregation in general, and his words of admonition may apply to very few of his hearers. But his words spoken in the confessional are directed exclusively to the penitent, whose heart is open to receive good counsel. The confessor exhorts the penitent according to his spiritual wants and besetting sins. He is cautioned against the frequentation of dangerous company and other occasions of sin, or he is recommended special practices of piety suitable to his condition. Hence missionaries are accustomed to estimate the fruit of a mission more by the number of penitents who have approached the sacred Tribunal than by the crowds who have listened to their sermons.

Of all the labors that our ministry imposes upon us, there are none more arduous or more irksome than the work of the confessional. It is no easy task to sit for six or eight hours on a hot summer's day, listening to stories of sin and sorrow and misery; and it is only the consciousness of the immense good he is doing that sustains the confessor in the sacred Tribunal. He "can have compassion on the ignorant and erring, because he himself is also encompassed with infirmity."[1]

I have seen the man whose conscience was laden with the accumulated sins of many years. Upon his countenance were stamped guilt and shame, remorse and confusion. There he stood by the confessional with a downcast mien, ashamed, like the Publican, to cast his eyes to Heaven. He glided

[1] Heb. v., 2.

into the little mercy-seat. No human ear will ever learn what there transpired, because the revelations in the confessional are a sealed book.

But during the moments spent with his confessor a resurrection occurred more gracious and miraculous than the raising of Lazarus from the tomb—it was the resurrection of a soul that had long lain wormeaten from the grave of sin. During these precious moments a ray from Heaven dispelled the darkness and gloom from that self-accuser's mind, and the genial warmth of the Holy Spirit melted his frozen heart, and the purifying influence of the same Spirit that had come upon the Apostles, "like a mighty wind from Heaven," scattered the poisonous atmosphere in which he had lived and filled his soul with Divine grace. And when he came out there was quickness in his movements and joy in his countenance and a new light in his eyes. And had you asked him, Why this change? he would have answered: Because I was lost and I am found; having been dead, I am come to life again.

Dearly beloved, why should you be deprived, as prodigals, of your Father's embrace, when you have so easy a means of reconciliation? Instead of disputing the power of Christ and His ministers, as the Scribes did in this day's Gospel, let it be your blessed privilege to imitate the devout multitude "who feared and glorified God, who had given such power to men."

"For, we have not a High Priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things, like as we are, yet without sin. Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid."[1]

[1] Heb. iv.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

ANGER AND REVENGE.

EPHES. IV., 23-28. "Be ye angry and sin not."

WE are angry and sin not, when our anger is the result of a sudden impulse, when it is momentary and unpremeditated and is repressed as soon as reason asserts its sway, for there is no sin where there is no consent of the will. "Anger," says the Scripture, "resteth in the bosom of fools," but it finds no resting-place in the breast of a wise man.

We are angry and sin not when we are inflamed at seeing injustice and iniquity enthroned, and justice and piety trampled under foot. Such was the righteous indignation of the Prophets when they denounced the sins of Israel. Such was the indignation of our Savior when, with a scourge, He drove the money-changers from the Temple. Such is the zeal of a pastor or parent who, in the exercise of his authority, administers a severe rebuke to a wrongdoer. He is indignant at the offence because he loves the offender and desires to wean him from his vice.

We are angry and we sin not when we turn our indignation against ourselves, and when we point the finger of reproach to our own breast, and say to ourselves what the Prophet Nathan said to David: "Thou art the man. Thou must amend thy life."

But we sin by anger when our denunciation of vice is not inspired by charity, but is prompted by intemperate zeal.

We sin by anger when, without just cause, we nurse our wrath; when we deliberately entertain it; when we brood over it and fan the flame of enmity in our breast; when we mentally prepare speeches to throw in the teeth of our neighbor and frame rejoinders to his expected answers. And our sin of anger becomes, of course, more grievous when it is aggravated and embittered by revenge and retaliation.

If a person entered your house for the purpose of disturbing the peace of your family by creating discord and strife among its members, you would use all your efforts to expel the intruder. Now, my brethren, anger and resentment, of which the Apostle speaks, is a demon of discord that rushes into the sanctuary of your hearts, in order to rob you of your peace and destroy the harmony that should reign therein. And, therefore, you ought to summon all the powers of your soul to banish the invader. That you may guard yourself more securely against this blind and reckless passion, let me set before you the fatal consequences, for time and eternity, of this sin, if it is allowed to run riot and is not restrained by Christian patience and self-denial.

Let us examine to what a frightful abyss unbridled anger plunges its victims. Observe a man when he is carried away by rancor and revenge. His countenance is transformed and assumes a brutal expression. His eyes dart fire, his heart throbs with violent emotion, and he foams at the mouth like a raving maniac. He is like a tempest-tossed vessel in a boisterous sea, without the helm of reason to guide him, and is driven by every wind of passion that agitates his disordered brain. While under the influence of blind rage his reason is dethroned, and his passions, like a furious mob,

hold sway over the faculties of his soul. His judgment is so warped that he is blind to the virtues of his enemies, and his imagination paints their alleged faults in the most exaggerated colors.

This interior commotion breaks forth into fierce exclamations, insulting words and even shocking blasphemies. His mouth becomes a volcano, belching forth lava of abuse and malediction. His tongue is like a two-edged sword, inflicting deep and painful wounds on the victim of his enmity. He will not spare his reputation, but will heap upon him words of bitter reproach, regardless of that sacred character more dear to man than life itself.

The revengeful man does not stop at vindictive thoughts and threatening words, but sometimes breaks out into deeds of violence and bloodshed. O, how many conflagrations has this firebrand of hatred enkindled since the beginning of time! How many affectionate families has it torn asunder! How many bosom friends has it caused to remain at eternal enmity with each other in consequence of some indiscreet remark which a little precaution and self-possession might have averted! How many are there dwelling under the same roof who continue shy and reserved for years, and are even alienated from each other's society on account of some bitter expression that fell from the lips of one of them, while a generous retraction on the one hand and a prompt act of forgiveness on the other would have broken down the wall of division which separates them and would have restored them to their former friendship. Oh, blessed humility! oh, blessed charity! twin guardians of domestic peace, without you there is no lasting harmony in the family!

An irascible temper, with the habit of breaking

forth into sallies of rage, is hurtful even to corporal health, for it deranges the digestive organs and impedes the normal functions of our physical being; so that asperity and malevolence are injurious to the laws of nature herself, whereas a benevolent disposition is healthful to both body and soul.

The spirit of hatred and ill-will not only destroys the domestic social bonds here on earth, but it excludes also from the society of the elect in Heaven. Listen to the words of the Apostle on this subject: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are . . . enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions . . . and such like, of which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."[1] When on the one hand we reflect how frequently the passion of resentment burns in our breasts, and how few of us have a complete control over the motions of our hearts; and when we view, on the other hand, the awful penalty of eternal condemnation which is denounced against the sin of enmity, we have reason to be filled with just fear and apprehension.

Let us now cast our eyes on Jesus, the Lamb of God, the great Model of Christian meekness, and learn how forcibly He condemns the spirit of deliberate rancor by precept and example. We may judge how odious this vice is to Him, since he threatens the same punishment against the sin of deliberate anger that God inflicted in the Old Law upon those who were guilty of the crime of murder: "Ye have heard that it was said (to the Jews) of old: Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And

[1] Gal. v.

whosoever shall say to his brother: Raca (a term expressive of contempt) shall be in danger of the Council. And whosoever shall say: Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

It will not avail you to be generous in your pious offerings to the Lord and His poor, so long as you are at enmity with an offending or an offended brother. Our Divine Lawgiver, who "will have mercy and not sacrifice," will not accept your gift of expiation until you have banished from your heart the spirit of animosity, and are reconciled to your neighbor. "If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first and be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." [1]

How prone we are to retaliation! We demand an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. We insist on returning word for word, injury for injury. And yet this spirit of reprisal is totally at variance with the maxims of the Gospel: "Ye have heard," says our Lord, "that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you not to resist evil. But if any man strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if a man will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. . . . Ye have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies. Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. That ye may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that

[1] Matt. v,

love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the Publicans this? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more? Do not also the heathens this? Be you, therefore, perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect."[1]

The example of Christ is in strict conformity with His teachings. When He holds Himself up as a Model to His disciples He asks them especially to learn of Him "because He is meek and humble of heart." So strikingly was this gentleness of spirit to be exhibited in our Lord's life that it became the particular subject of many prophecies concerning Him long before His advent into the world. Thus we are told by the Prophet Isaiah that "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter; He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and shall not open His mouth."[2] And Jesus fulfilled these predictions to the letter, for we always find Him to be the same gentle Lamb, never displaying His anger, unless when He is moved by a holy zeal for the glory of His Father. Our Savior gave a remarkable proof of His mild and forgiving disposition on a particular occasion recorded in the Gospel. Being refused admittance into a city of Samaria, His disciples, as yet untrained in the self-denying maxims of the Gospel, urged Him to call down fire from Heaven to consume its inhospitable people. But our Lord, far from complying with their vindictive request, meekly replied: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save."

Need I recall to your minds that superhuman silence and calmness of temper which He maintained during the hours of His Passion, when he was dragged from one court to another and loaded with the most revolting insults; when He was

[1] Matt. v. [2] Isaiah liii.

scourged and spit upon by men whom by the fiat of His will He could have ground to dust and scattered their ashes to the four winds of heaven? How did He avenge Himself on that occasion? Behold, brethren, the vengeance of a dying God: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But if you consider the example of Christ too arduous for imitation, let me set before you the conduct of King David, who, as he lived under the Old Law, had far less supernatural help than we possess for resisting the promptings of resentment and was not fortified, as we are, by the examples of our Lord and His Saints.

David had been for a long time the innocent object of King Saul's jealousy and unrelenting persecution. He escaped with his life only by flight. On one occasion he is pursued through the Wilderness by Saul with an armed band. Saul, overcome by fatigue, falls into a sound sleep in his tent, while his spear stands by his side. David's companions beg permission to slay his enemy, saying that God had placed him in their hands, and that by one stroke their master would be rid of all future molestation. But David replied: "Kill him not, for who shall put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and shall be guiltless?" Like the lion that disdains to slay a sleeping prey, the lion-hearted David would not strike his pursuer sleeping at his feet. Which of us, under similar circumstances, would have spared a persecutor?

Some time afterwards a messenger hastens to David, saying: Saul is dead. I slew him. He had hoped to be thanked and rewarded by David for killing his adversary. Does the Royal Prophet recompense the messenger, or does he rejoice in the death of his adversary? Far from entertaining such sentiments, he orders the messenger to be

put to death for having laid hands on the Lord's anointed. He rends his garments, and in the excess of his grief he invokes imprecations on the mountain where Saul was slain: "Ye mountains of Gelboa, let neither dew nor rain come upon you, neither be they fields of first fruits; for there was cast away the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil." [1] And to crown his magnanimity, when informed that his enemy had been honorably buried by the people of that country, the noble-hearted monarch bountifully rewarded them for having performed the last rites over his remains.

Shall it be said that it is cowardly and dishonorable to bear injuries and not to resent them? On the contrary, to forgive injuries is always the mark of a noble and magnanimous mind. It is only the pusillanimous and ignoble that know not how to pardon. Is not Jesus Christ the type of perfect manhood? And who was more forbearing than He? What man could exhibit more courage than Stephen, the proto-martyr? He confronted a crowd of bigoted and excitable Jews and plainly told them that as their fathers had killed the Prophets, so they crucified the Savior of the world. He is dragged outside the city and stoned to death, while he offers a dying prayer for his executioners.

What braver man or more heroic soldier appears in the Old Testament than David, of whom I have already spoken—David who when a youth slew the giant Goliath, and afterwards routed thousands of Philistines? Yet he saved the life of Saul and forgave him. Hence St. Chrysostom says that David merits more honor for sparing Saul than for conquering Goliath, because in overthrowing Goliath he conquered an enemy; but in

[1] II. Sam. i.

pardoning Saul he conquered himself. And "better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities." [1]

You may tell me that you cannot overcome a feeling of aversion or dislike for one that has injured you. Your feelings, I admit, are sometimes beyond your control. But, happily, it is not by your *feelings* that you will be judged, but by your *deliberate will.* If, notwithstanding these emotions of repugnance you heartily forgive your offender; if you are kind to him and ready to serve him when necessary, you perform an act of heroic virtue more pleasing to God than if your reconciliation were accompanied by sensible pleasure. Remember, then, that in taking revenge for an injury you gratify a passion common to you with the brute creation. In forgiving an enemy you manifest the attribute of a God.

The Holy Ghost exhorts us not only to pardon the offender, but to forget, as far as possible, the injury done to us: "Remember not," says Ecclesiasticus, "any injury done thee by thy neighbor, and do thou nothing by deeds of injury." [2] There is a vicious maxim, which says: "I will forgive, but I won't forget," which words may be thus interpreted: I will conceal my resentment. I will bide my time, but I will take care later on to make known to my offender the injury he has done me. This is not forgiveness, but a postponement of revenge. This is not extinguishing the fire of anger, but burying the coals in our breast until a more favorable time occurs for rekindling them. Let us endeavor to be as generous to our sinning brother as God is towards us, when He says: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will *remember* their sin *no more.*" [3]

[1] Prov. xvi [2] Eccles. x. [3] Jer. xxxl.

Perhaps you will tell me that it is impossible for you to imitate the noble examples of forgiveness I have proposed to you because you have an irascible temper and you despair of obtaining the mastery over it, like the Saints of God, whom your imagination pictures as persons of constitutionally mild and amiable dispositions. The Saints were composed of the same material as you are made of, and it was only by determined efforts that they conquered their rebellious nature. Witness St. Francis de Sales. He was naturally of an impetuous and choleric humor, but after a labor of twenty years he acquired so complete a control over himself as to deserve to be called the meekest of men. Let us, then, have recourse to the same weapons that Christian heroes wielded in subduing their resentful passions, and our efforts, like theirs, shall be crowned with victory and peace.

You have seen that anger begins with thoughts, proceeds to words, and often ends in violent deeds. In order, therefore, to overcome this vice, you must regulate the first emotions of your heart and thus you will cure the evil in its root. As soon as the impulse of indignation rises in your breast cry in spirit to Jesus, saying to Him with His disciples sinking on the Sea of Galilee: "Lord, save us, we perish." And He who calmed the winds and waves and rescued the Apostles will appease the troubled waters of your soul, and restore you to tranquillity of mind.

Endeavor to maintain silence while the storm lasts, and mentally beseech God in the words of the Psalmist, "to set a watch before your mouth and a door of prudence about your lips, that your heart may not incline to words of malice to seek excuses in sin." And when you break silence let your speech be full of mildness and charity. Let

it be directed to quell the rage of your brother. Let it be like oil poured on the troubled waters of his soul, to appease the violence of his wrath. "A mild word," says the Wise Man, "softeneth wrath."

And be not content with mere words, but clearly show by your conduct that you entertain no feelings of malice towards your offending brother. Strive to render him any service in your power, following the counsel of the Apostle: "Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved, but give place unto wrath; for it is written: Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink; for doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good."[1] You will burn and consume his anger by the fire of your charity, and you will adopt the most efficient means of conquering the heart of your enemy.

I shall exhort you in conclusion, in the words of St. Paul, "to let no evil speech proceed from your mouth, and to grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation, and clamor, and blasphemy be taken away from you with all malice, and be ye kind to one another, mercifully forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven you in Christ."[2]

[1] Rom. xii. [2] Eph. iv.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

SICKNESS A SEASON OF DIVINE MERCY.

JOHN IV., 46-55.

WHEN the Ruler saw his son stricken down with a grievous malady he, no doubt, looked upon this visitation as an unmixed calamity. In reality, however, as the sequel showed, this sickness was a blessing in disguise, for it proved to be the providential occasion of the conversion of the Ruler himself and his entire family. The illness of the son impelled the father to have recourse to the great Physician whose deeds of mercy were reported throughout the surrounding country. The pathetic appeal of the Ruler to the Savior was rewarded by the instantaneous healing of his child. His miraculous recovery resulted in making the father a disciple of Christ, whose conversion was followed by that of his whole household. Had the Ruler's son not been prostrated by disease, the father would not have sought our Lord and he would most probably have died, as he had lived, an unbeliever. Thus the sickness of the boy proved to be the first link in the chain of temporal and spiritual blessings.

An incident which bears some analogy to the case of the Ruler occurred within my own recollection in one of the missions of Maryland. A zealous clergyman, in making the rounds of his parish, happened to call at the home of an aged lady, a stranger to the faith, who was suffering with a

fatal disease. The casual visit of the priest resulted in the conversion and baptism of the invalid, and soon afterwards the father, son and grandchildren embraced the Catholic religion. I had the consolation of confirming, at the same time, three generations of that excellent family.

Are we not disposed to look upon sickness in the light in which the Ruler viewed it as an unmitigated evil? We contemplate it only as a source of expense, of alarm and pain. We would consider it an outrage on truth and common sense to regard corporal maladies as a visitation for which we ought to be thankful.

Moreover, we are all tempted to regard the time of our illness as singularly inopportune and unfortunate, because our minds are too clouded to pray and we are debarred from the duty of providing for our household. But the season must be well-timed, because it is chosen by the great Dispenser. If we cannot present to Him the incense of our prayers, or to our family the fruit of our labor, we can, at least, offer to the Lord the acceptable myrrh of corporal mortification.

As everyone is liable to be taken ill at one time or another, for sickness, like death, knocks at the palace of the rich as well as at the cottage of the poor, let us consider with what dispositions we ought to receive this messenger. Everyone has a word of praise for health. Scarcely anyone will be an apologist for sickness. Let me say a good word today for this dread and unwelcome visitor.

Now, I hold that bodily ailment has its attendant uses and blessings, as well as sound health; that it is a drastic and bitter, but salutary, medicine; that if accepted in a spirit of Christian resignation it chastens the sufferer, detaching him from earth and lifting him up to higher and holier aspirations;

that it is designed by an overruling Providence as a period of grace, not only to the invalid, but also to the other members of the household. "Good things and evil (such as health and sickness), life and death, poverty and riches, are from God."[1]

First—Sickness affords us an opportunity of entering into ourselves. It gives us food and time for reflection. "A grievous sickness," says the Wise Man, "maketh the soul sober." Is it not true that, as long as we are in the enjoyment of vigorous health, we allow our minds to be absorbed by the cares and ambitions, the pleasures and delights, the hopes and fears of this world? Any thoughts regarding our moral improvement, regarding death and judgment, or of future life, we are tempted to brush aside as so many impertinences which have no right to stand between us and our comfortable environments. We are inclined to commune with ourselves with all the sense of security and self-reliance of the rich man mentioned in the parable. "I will pull down my barns and will build greater, and into them I will gather all things that are grown to me and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest; eat, drink, make good cheer."[2] Oh! how true are the words of the Prophet: "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is no one that thinketh in his heart."[3]

But when the hand of God has laid us low, then, like King Ezechias stretched on his bed of sickness, we begin to consider all our years in the bitterness of our hearts. Then we realize that there is something else worthy of our consideration above the gratification of our desires or the accumulation of wealth. Then, convinced of the frailty

[1] Eccles. xi., 14. [2] Luke xii., 18, 19. [3] Jer. xii.

of this mortal body, we study to secure the health of our immortal soul. Seeing, then, what a precarious hold we have on our earthly riches, we strive to lay up treasures in Heaven, and, conscious of the impotence of human aid, we place our trust in the omnipotent and merciful hands of God.

Many conspicuous heralds of the Gospel and exemplary Christians could trace their spiritual regeneration to the serious reflections in which they were engaged during the solitary hours of a protracted illness.

St. Ignatius, who fought and was wounded at the siege of Pampeluna, was carried to the castle of Loyola. During his convalescence he asked for a book on chivalry to divert his mind. As no such work was at hand, he was supplied with a copy of the lives of our Savior and the Saints, which made so deep an impression on him that before leaving the sick chamber he resolved to become a soldier of the cross.

Archbishop Audu, the venerable patriarch of the Chaldeans, with whom I became acquainted at the Vatican Council, related to me the history of his conversion. In his youth he was bent on the gaiety and pleasures of the world. One day, while on one of his excursions, he happened to visit the Chaldean monastery. As he was entering the gate the keystone of the arch fell and severely wounded him. During his convalescence in the cloister he devoted much time to pious reading, and so profoundly was he affected by the instructions and example of the fathers that he left the sacred retreat a fervent Christian. He afterwards studied for the ministry, and was finally elevated to the rank of patriarch.

Is not the history of our hospitals and sanitariums a record of the loving mercy of our Heavenly

Father wrought upon souls that have been purified in the crucible of long and painful physical sufferings? Rarely, indeed, do any patients die in these institutions without being chastened by repentance and fortified by the grace of the Sacraments, especially when their sickness is prolonged. How many of them, had they retained a vigorous health, would have exulted in their strength and have plunged like untamed colts into the precipice of vice, if they had not been restrained by the bit and curb of a spell of chastening malady.

Second—Sickness is the most salutary penance that can be imposed upon us. We are all more or less sinful in the sight of God. "In many things we all offend," says the Apostle. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Now, works of penance are absolutely indispensable for salvation to those who have sinned. All the indulgences of the Church, all the power given her to forgive sins, are insufficient to dispense us from personal acts of mortification. "Mortify the members of your body which are upon the earth." "Unless ye do penance, ye shall all likewise perish." If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life for My sake shall possess it unto life everlasting."

Now there are three kinds of penance, as St. Francis de Sales remarks. The first consists of those self-imposed fasts and mortifications which we voluntarily inflict upon ourselves. These are good. The second consists of those enjoined by the Church, such as the fast of Lent. These are better. The third comprises those imposed by Al-

mighty God, such as sickness and other afflictions, and these are the best of all.

Seeing that we have not the courage to subject ourselves to voluntary deeds of penance, or even to observe those of the Church, God in His mercy visits us with a remedial penalty of His own selection. This consideration should prompt us to accept ailments and other corporal pains with patience and cheerful resignation.

It was in this spirit that Job bore the sufferings which were sent him for a trial of his faith, rather than for the punishment of his sins. The winds blow down the house in which his children were sheltered, and they are crushed to death. The lightning destroys his cattle and robbers slay his servants. The Lord permits him to be afflicted with a loathsome illness, that he might serve as an example to posterity. He ascribes his misfortunes, neither to the winds or lightning, nor to the robbers nor to Satan, but he recognizes the hand of God in all that happened to him, and exclaims: "If we have received good things from the hands of God, why should we not receive evil?"

Tobias is constantly engaged in befriending his fellow exiles in Ninive. He strengthens their faith, visits the sick and buries the dead, and in the midst of his good works he is struck blind. And this happened, says the Sacred Text, that he might serve as an example of patience to succeeding generations.

Thousands of invalids in every age have derived far more consolation from the examples of patience exhibited by Job and Tobias in their bodily infirmities, than from the virtues they displayed in the days of their health.

The sight of Paul preaching the resurrection of the dead to the idolatrous people of Athens at the

Areopagus is an inspiring spectacle. But much more consoling to us is the contemplation of Paul languishing in a Roman prison, and on the eve of his death writing to Timothy: "The time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day."

There is another class of invalids, and a very numerous class at that, who are on the border land between health and sickness, who are neither well nor ill, but whose habitual state is one of infirm and delicate health; and who, notwithstanding their bodily ailments, never neglect their business avocations, their domestic pursuits and their duties of religion. These persons may be truly said, with the Apostle, "to carry always about with them the mortification of Jesus that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in their bodies."[1]

For the consolation and encouragement of those intrepid souls I will remark that a great number of the most illustrious Doctors and Fathers of the Church were afflicted by corporal infirmities, and wrote their immortal works in a feeble state of health. Among others I may mention notably St. Gregory the Great, St. Basil, Venerable Bede and St. Bernard. The writings of these Saints are marked by a sweetness, an unction and an almost inspired wisdom, which render them conspicuous even among the Fathers of the Church. Venerable Bede translated the Gospel of St. John from the Latin into the Saxon in frail health, and died immediately after dictating to an amanuensis the last verse of the Gospel.

[1] II. Cor. iv., 10.

But a sickness visitation is a season of grace, not only to the patients themselves, but to the other members of the family as well. When the angel of sorrow presides over the household the voice of anger or ribaldry and profanity is hushed; a solemn religious atmosphere pervades the domestic circle. The loosened threads of conjugal, parental and filial affection are more closely knit together. The heroic devotion of wife, mother and daughter is summoned into action. There is no love stronger, more unselfish and persevering than that exhibited by the female sex in the hour of domestic mourning. Their untiring ministration is no labor to them, or if it is a labor the labor is loved. These devoted women, in performing miracles of mercy, are imitating our blessed Redeemer, as far as human infirmity can imitate Divine power, and never does our Lord appear to us so amiable and attractive as when he is healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind and strengthening the paralyzed limb.

It has been observed that confirmed invalids who bear their infirmities with Christian patience are a blessing to the home in which they dwell. Their sufferings are accepted as a vicarious penance, and an atonement for the shortcomings of the other members of the household, by "presenting their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God."[1]

A spirit of confiding and humble prayer should go hand in hand with the nursing of the sick, and while the skill of the physician should be invoked the aid of the Divine Physician should not be overlooked. The prayer of Mary and Martha to Jesus during the illness of their brother is a model worthy of imitation. They did not ask for the recovery of Lazarus, nor did they formulate any special request. They simply said: "Lord, behold he whom

[1] Rom. xii.

Thou lovest is sick." They left the issue entirely to His good pleasure. And even after his death their hope in Christ was not weakened. For Martha said to Him: "I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."[1] Let these be your sentiments when you are ministering to the sick. The Lord will restore your cherished patient, if it is expedient for his salvation, or if the sickness is unto death he will give you interior grace to bear the cross.

How different were the sentiments of a lady who told me that she had ceased to pray because President Garfield had died, notwithstanding the petitions that were offered to God for his restoration to health. She said: I prayed for his recovery; my family prayed for him, our congregation prayed for him, the city, state and nation prayed for him, but all our prayers were unavailing. I told her that no good prayer was ever offered in vain; that if God does not grant the direct object of our petition He gives us something equivalent, or even better. If the Lord did not save the life of the President, He saved the life of the nation, which is of much more value than the life of an individual. He inspired the citizens with a greater abhorrence of assassination, and a more profound reverence for the Chief Magistrate of the country. He extinguished the fierce passions engendered by party strife, and infused into the breasts of the American people the nobler and healthier sentiments of patriotism and brotherly love.

You, my brethren, who are in the enjoyment of vigorous health, should thank God for this blessing, and be determined to employ every organ of your senses and every member of your body in a manner worthy of a rational being, worthy of a

[1] John xi., 22.

Christian, worthy of a creature of God who will exact of you an account of how you have spent these gifts of nature. "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For, he that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting."[1]

If you suffer from a frail constitution, reflect that perhaps if you possessed a robust frame you would have abused it, like so many others, to the detriment of your soul, and that it pleased your Creator to subdue the animal man so as to give the spirit the victory over the flesh.

If you are prostrated by a serious and threatening illness, bear the affliction with cheerful submission, saying with the Lord: "The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" If tempted to complain, cast your eyes on your dying Savior, whose bed was the cross, whose pillow was a crown of thorns, whose medicine was vinegar and gall, whose nurses were His executioners and an insulting rabble. If St. Paul not only submitted to the stripes inflicted on him by the enemies of the Gospel, but "chastised his body and brought it into subjection," surely we who are so tender to our flesh, and shrink from self-imposed austerities, should bear with Christian fortitude the medicinal chastisements of a sickness visitation.

When the time of your dissolution is at hand may you be able to say with the Apostle "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."[2] Look forward to that life where no sickness or pains or infirmities exist, but eternal youth and health and strength and everlasting joy and rest.

[1] Gal. vi., 8. [2] II. Cor. v.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

PAY WHAT THOU OWEST.

MATT. XVIII., 23-35. "Pay what thou owest."

JUSTICE is a virtue which prompts us to pay what we owe to our neighbor. It is the foundation-stone of social order and of business intercourse. For if we did not believe that men had a sense of justice we would have no confidence in their integrity, and without this confidence commercial life would be paralyzed. Dishonesty is diametrically opposed to justice. I propose this morning to set before you some of the principal ways in which dishonesty is practised in mercantile and private life. I think that this subject should be treated more frequently in our churches; for there would be fewer occasions for the exercise of helping the needy if every one came by his own.

First—In the first place, that man has a loose conception of business integrity who does not keep a strict account of his indebtedness. For, if he keeps no record of his obligations, he is liable to overlook and forget them. If he forgets them, he may be tempted to increase his liabilities. If he goes on augmenting his debts, he may be startled by their magnitude, and may be unable to meet them when the day of reckoning comes.

Second—There are some men who are criminally negligent and dilatory in the payment of their honest debts. They will allow weeks and months, and sometimes even years, to pass without meeting

their just obligations. Their remissness does not arise from their inability to discharge this duty, but rather from a blunted conscience and a morbid attachment to wealth. They regard the creditor as a Shylock and complain of his importunities, though he is demanding only what is justly his due. They make no account of the annoyance, inconvenience and pecuniary loss that the creditor sustains from their perverse procrastination.

Some years ago I met a citizen in a distant city who had a formidable title prefixed to his name. He regarded himself as a man of honor, and he would resent any imputation on his integrity. He would deem it a disgrace not to pay promptly a gambling debt, but he had lax notions about his honest obligations. He thus accosted me: "A certain man had the assurance to ask me today in the street to pay a bill that I owe him. I felt insulted, sir, and I did not fail to tell him so." If I had had any spiritual jurisdiction over the person referred to I would have replied to him: Sir, it is not you, but your creditor, who ought to feel offended. Pay your debts. The money you have in bank or in your purse is not yours, so long as your creditors' just demands remain unpaid.

Third—Dishonesty in another form is committed by those who borrow money without having any well-grounded hopes of being able to refund it. Yet they will give you the positive assurance that the loan will be restored at a stated time. When you press them for information regarding their ability to do so they will acknowledge that for some time they have been out of employment, that they have no visible means of support, and that the prospects before them are far from being bright. Thus they make an absolute promise which is based on a very uncertain contingency. If they had

frankly told you from the outset that, while sincerely desiring to repay the loan they could give no positive pledge, you would commend their candor and veracity, though placing little reliance on the security, and they might appeal at least to your benevolence if they did not commend themselves to your business methods. The man who tries to eke out a subsistence by borrowing money soon becomes lost to all sense of honor and self-respect, and he forfeits the confidence of the community in which he lives.

Many of you are familiar with one of Dickens' well-known characters, Wilkins Micawber. He sustained a checkered existence on borrowed money, for which he insisted on giving a receipt, and he was always precise in adding the fraction of a half-penny, if necessary, to the pounds, shillings and pence. When he gave his acknowledgment he was as proud and self-satisfied as if he had presented the creditor with gilt-edge security. He felt as happy in the acquisition of the new loan as if he had come into possession of an inheritance. And he usually celebrated the event by a convivial cup with the partner of his joys and sorrows.

As an offset to the foregoing example, I will mention that some years ago I was acquainted with a young man in this city who was studying with the view to embracing a profession. Though he had scarcely enough for a bare subsistence, he declined to accept any proffered loan. He is now enjoying a lucrative practice in his profession. But he is far more economic in his habits than those who, like Micawber, live on borrowed capital; for he was taught in the school of adversity to appreciate the value of a dollar. I would hold him up as a model to all of you young men who are entering on a business or professional career.

Fourth—Another instance of dishonesty consists in being generous without being just. A man is liberal in his alms to the poor. He is munificent in responding to the calls of religion. He will contribute towards the erection of a church. He will spend his money lavishly at fairs and picnics. He will subscribe handsomely towards the erection of a monument or some other municipal or national enterprise. He will freely entertain his friends at a sumptuous banquet in some fashionable hotel. But all this time he is neglecting the paramount duty of paying his debts.

My friends, you must be just before you are bountiful. It is most commendable to open your purse in the cause of charity and religion, of civic enterprise and hospitality. But this should not be done at the expense of your neighbor. You must not rob Peter to pay Paul. And you rob Peter to pay Paul when you bestow in charity to Paul what in justice belongs to Peter. Zaccheus, who entertained our Lord, had a proper conception of his duties. "Behold, O Lord," he said, "I give half of my goods to the poor, and if I have wronged anyone of anything I restore fourfold." He was not content with being generous to the poor, but he repaid his creditors with usury.

There is another form of dishonest life far more common and reprehensible than the vice just mentioned—I refer to the pernicious habit of living above one's means. In fact, this vice may be considered as characteristic of Americans. Our countrymen are fond of making money, but they are still fonder of squandering it. It has been said with truth that a French or German family can subsist on what is wasted by an American family.

One of the causes of this fatal extravagance is

the love of self-indulgence and the ambition of keeping pace with our neighbor in the race of social distinction. I am envious of my neighbor when I observe that he keeps a splendid equipage; that his house is elegantly furnished; that he fares sumptuously; that he entertains lavishly; that his wife is dressed in the latest fashion, and I am determined not to be outdone by him. I enter upon a career of prodigality totally disproportionate to my income. But in a few years I find myself overwhelmed with debt and on the road to bankruptcy. I have been burning the candle at both ends. I have been squandering my present income, and have been mortgaging my future revenue.

The man who lives beyond his means is not leading an honest life. My young friends, you who are on the threshold of a business career, practice a rigid economy. Live within your income, no matter how modest that income may be. Save up something for a rainy day. This is more easily done than you imagine. Where there is a will there is a way. The wants of nature are few and are easily supplied. Sweeter to your palate are bread and water in a garret, when you are free from debt, than is a delicious feast to the spendthrift who is tortured by the spectre of the creditor knocking at his door. While the insolvent debtor is a slave, you will possess a free and independent spirit and will enjoy the testimony of a good conscience.

Another common system of fraud consists in the use of unequal weights and measures. This is one of the oldest methods of dishonesty; for it is strongly denounced by Moses and other sacred writers in the pages of the Old Testament. "Divers weights and measures," says the Book of Proverbs, "are both abominable before God." A

school teacher asked the children of her class how many ounces make a pound. One of the pupils, whose father was in the grocery business, answered: "Teacher, I know, but it is a secret." When pressed for an explanation, he replied: "When we buy, we demand sixteen ounces to the pound; but when we sell, that is a business secret." But the day will come when the unjust tradesman himself will be weighed in the balance and will be found wanting.

There is another species of dishonesty which is conducted on a larger scale. I allude to the iniquity of watering stock and floating it on the market, of inflating stocks and bonds and giving them a fictitious value. This sin is the more odious, as it is not the result of a sudden impulse of temptation, but is perpetrated in cold blood by sharp-witted men who court the esteem of their fellow-citizens. They use all kinds of specious arguments to catch the unwary in their toils, and inflict untold misery on a too-confiding community.

I might also allude here to dishonest presidents and cashiers of banks and business-house clerks. Their number, thank God, is very small, compared with the army of loyal and upright officials. These unfaithful officers yield to the criminal desire of growing suddenly rich. They secretly appropriate the funds of the institution in which they are employed, with the vague intention of restoring them. They gamble in stocks and other securities, hoping to realize large profits. Their first venture is a failure. They cast the dice again and again, each time staking larger sums with the same results, until they have gone down the stream of speculation too far to retrace their steps and hide their iniquity. They involve themselves in irreparable ruin and degradation. All the waters of the Missis-

sippi could not blot out the stain. A name that before was mentioned with honor is now whispered with bated breath or covered with the charity of silence. The last chapter in their sad history is usually suicide, exile or the penitentiary, or a ruined life at home, with a blasted reputation. Oh, if in the first instance they had spurned the tempter they would have escaped unspeakable torture and would have lived and died honored by their fellow-citizens, and possessing what is infinitely more precious than wealth, even as a commercial asset—the legacy of a spotless reputation.

But it may happen that, without any fault of yours, you may suffer financial disaster by the failure of those with whom you have business relations, or by adverse circumstances which you could not foresee, and over which you had no control. In that event do not yield to despair. Take courage. Begin over again at the first rung of the ladder. God will aid you to ascend. The life of Sir Walter Scott is a noble example in point. That great man became involved in debt to the extent of three quarters of a million dollars through the insolvency of his publishers. He declined offers of pecuniary aid from his friends, and set to work with a hearty good will to meet his liabilities. He wrote book after book with extraordinary rapidity, laboring night and day, often in the midst of excruciating bodily pain and mental anguish, and he struggled on to cancel his debts, until his intellectual powers gave way. I do not know which to admire more—the splendid genius of the writer, or the lofty integrity of the man.

No matter by what means one may become possessed of property which is not his own, justice requires that he should try to discover the owner, and, if found, restitution should be made to him.

There is a story told of a poor woman who on returning one day from market was bewailing her poverty, for her scanty means were exhausted. While brooding over her condition she stumbled and fell, and in the fall her outstretched hand touched a purse lying in the road containing one hundred gold crowns. Her first sensation was one of joy that she had found a treasure to relieve her pressing wants. But on reflecting that the treasure-trove was not her own, she determined to restore it to the owner. A few days later, having learned that a reward of ten crowns was offered to the finder, she hastened to give the owner his purse and receive her reward. But the miser was reluctant to part with the ten crowns, and he falsely maintained that the lost purse had contained one hundred and ten crowns when she found it. This she indignantly denied, solemnly declaring that it contained only one hundred crowns. The dispute was referred to a civil tribunal. The judge, after hearing both sides, gave a decision worthy of Solomon. "You maintain, sir," he said to the man, "that your purse contained one hundred and ten crowns when you lost it. Evidently the purse which was found is not yours. And you, my good woman," he said to the finder, "swear that the purse you found, contained only one hundred crowns. It is yours: keep it until the true owner is found."

I have spoken of the sin of dishonesty. Let me now say a word about the upright citizen. All honor to the merchant or professional man who has left behind him a clean record. The man of business who has never soiled his hands with ill-gotten wealth; who has never taken undue advantage of his neighbor in a monetary transaction; whose word is his bond—the man who has punctu-

ally paid his honest debts; who has never sheltered himself behind a legal technicality to escape a financial obligation; the man who, in every vicissitude of trade and commerce, in adversity as well as in prosperity, has maintained the honor of his good name—in a word, all honor to the man who has passed through the perils and battles of commercial life with a character unblemished—such a man, I hold, is more worthy of our esteem and veneration than the victorious general who returns in triumph from a prolonged war. For, surely, a business campaign is usually more protracted and requires more persevering energy and courage than a military conquest: "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than War."

Listen to the eulogy that the Holy Scripture pronounces on such a man: "Blessed is the rich man that is found without blemish; who is he, and we will praise him, for he hath done wonderful things in his life; who could have transgressed and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things and hath not done them. Therefore are his goods established in the Lord, and all the Church of the Saints will declare his alms."

I knew a merchant who possessed in an eminent degree the qualities above enumerated. He has long since gone to his reward; he died honored in the community in which he had lived. I will mention one incident in his life, to illustrate the rectitude of his character. While he was a director in a leading bank he sold a portion of its stock, which was to be delivered in a few days. But the day after the sale the directors discovered that the bank had sustained a heavy loss by reason of the cashier's defalcation. As a consequence, there was a considerable shrinkage in the value of the stock.

Several days elapsed before the directors were prepared to make an official statement of the embezzlement and its injurious effects on the bank. On the appointed day the purchaser, ignorant as yet of the loss sustained by the bank, called to get possession of its stock. The director refused to surrender it, and was not then prepared to disclose the reason for his action. The purchaser earnestly insisted on the transfer and had almost recourse to violence. He afterwards brought a mutual friend to argue with the director, but all in vain. He refused to effect the sale. A few days later, when the bank officials had made a public announcement of the defalcation, the would-be purchaser at once realized the situation and perceived that, if the sale had been consummated, he would have been a heavy loser and the owner a corresponding gainer.

A man with a less delicate sense of commercial ethics would have closed the sale, and would have justified himself on the plea that he had acted in good faith; but my venerable friend would have scorned to be a party to a transaction that would, in the slightest degree, sully his conscience, or arouse against him the faintest breath of suspicion. He went down to his honored grave, leaving to his children and his children's children the precious heritage of a pure faith and a spotless reputation for business integrity.

The moral that I wish to draw from these remarks is contained in the words of the Apostle: "Render to all men their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, taxes to whom taxes are due, honor to whom honor is due. Owe no man anything, but that ye love one another, for he who loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." From this debt of charity you can never be absolved. It is a debt that always confronts you as long as you live.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

OBEDIENCE TO ALL LAWFUL AUTHORITY.

MATT. XXII., 15-21. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

THESE words of Christ embody the whole duty of man, so far as his obedience to all lawful authority is concerned. You will all agree with me that no greater natural blessing can exist in a community than to find good order, tranquillity and security of life and property firmly established among its inhabitants. These blessings are secured by the reign of law. "Order is Heaven's first law." Now there are three elements which conspire and which are necessary to maintain this order in domestic and social life.

First—The enactment of wise and judicious legislation for the government of the Commonwealth. Second—A judicial and executive authority interpreting, administering and enforcing these enactments. Third—Law-abiding citizens, or subjects faithfully submitting to the ordinances imposed upon them. These principles apply to the whole range of human life.

Look into the Kingdom of God that is within you. Contemplate your soul, which is a world in miniature. That little world is inhabited by various tenants "which live and move and have their being." You have there an intellect, and a will, and memory and imagination. You have inclinations, emotions and passions that are swayed to and fro, and jostle one another like a promiscuous crowd. In this kingdom of the soul God has written

His law. You have a conscience to interpret and enforce this law. So long as your faculties and passions are subservient to the voice of conscience, peace reigns supreme. But as soon as the passions rebel against conscience anarchy, disorder and tumult hold sway, and the soul is tormented by remorse.

Passing from the empire of the soul to the patriarchal and primeval commonwealth of the family, the domestic kingdom is ruled by the father and mother, whom the children and servants are required to obey. Filial obedience is forcibly inculcated by Holy Scripture: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest live a long time, and that it may be well for thee in the land which the Lord thy God shall give unto thee." So long as parents exercise a salutary control over their children, both by word and example, and bring them up in the fear and love of God; and so long as the children love and honor their parents, peace and harmony are sure to reign in the family, and the home is a haven of rest. But if they rebel against the lawful authority of their parents discord and strife, discontent and dissensions are sure to put to flight the angel of peace.

Ascending from the family to the Church, we find that this vast spiritual domain is ruled by divers ecclesiastical functionaries, exercising different grades of authority. The Pope, as Vicar of Christ, has jurisdiction over the entire Church. The bishop rules in his diocese, and the pastor in his parish. The authority of the hierarchy is clearly set forth in the words of Christ Himself: "Go, teach all nations, . . . and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." "You shall be wit-

nesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost bounds of the earth." St. Paul says: "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief. For this is not expedient for you." [1]

So long as the faithful diligently observe the laws of God and of His Church, and submit to the legitimate authority of their pastors, heavenly peace and concord reign in the Kingdom of God upon earth; while resistance to lawful authority is the fruitful source of lamentable schisms and dissensions.

But our Savior tells us that we are bound, not only to render to God the things that are God's, but also to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. We owe allegiance to the temporal powers as well as to the spiritual rulers. The same Lord who commands us to obey the Divine law requires us also to uphold the civil laws of the nation. And surely, of all people on the face of the earth, the American citizen should take a special delight in submitting to the legislation imposed upon him, and in being loyal to his country and its institutions.

In despotic countries the people are ruled with an iron hand. Large standing armies and a formidable police force are scattered over the length and breadth of the empire to terrorize the subjects and keep them in subjection. A network of spies is spread over the land, ready to catch the unwary in their toils, and often innocent victims are sacrificed to their irresponsible power. Star-chambers, or secret tribunals, are set up, where persons are tried and arbitrarily condemned without due process of law. Freedom of speech and of the press

[1] Heb. xiii.

is stifled. The subjects must submit to laws in the framing of which they had no part.

How different is our situation! There are no immense standing armies among us to intimidate the people and to drain their resources. There are no government spies to watch and report our movements and conduct. No star-chambers are tolerated here. Everyone accused, even the greatest criminal, has a right to defend himself. We enjoy liberty of speech and of the press, and we are free to criticise the public conduct of all civil functionaries.

With what alacrity should we observe the laws that are framed for our material comfort and protection, and with what cordiality we should exhibit proper respect for those in authority, since we had a part in their selection! We cannot better prove our love for our country than by faithfully observing her laws, and we cannot better uphold the dignity of the nation at home and abroad than by deporting ourselves as upright and blameless citizens. No man who sets at defiance the laws of the commonwealth can be a good citizen. The man who breaks the laws of the state is violating, at the same time, some Commandment of the Decalogue. The citizen who buys or sells votes, or who climbs into political power by corrupt means, is transgressing the Commandment which says: "Thou shalt not steal." He robs the defeated candidate of the office to which he is justly entitled, and robs the voters of the execution of their recorded will. The moral condition of the state is what we ourselves make it. It is our own creation, for the state is composed of units of citizens. The destiny of the commonwealth, under God, is in our own hands.

But while it is clear that the private citizen is

bound to respect and honor the civil magistrate, it is equally manifest, especially in a constitutional government like ours, that the citizen has an undoubted right to criticise the official conduct of the public functionaries. A calm, temperate and dispassionate judgment passed upon the official acts of those in authority serves a wise and useful purpose. It admonishes the servants of the law, of their faults, their short-comings and delinquencies, and affords them an opportunity of correcting their mistakes. It also reminds them of what a protracted term of office tempts them to forget—that they are the servants, and not the masters, of their constituents.

First—But you will say: Is it not unmanly, slavish and degrading for any man to submit to the will of another? Are not all men born equal? Is not, therefore, one man's rule over another a usurpation? It is true, indeed, that no man has any intrinsic or inborn right over another. Neither president, nor governor, nor mayor, nor magistrate has any prerogative to command, unless authority be given him by a higher power. But it is just because the magistrate has authority from God that he has the right to command our obedience.

The divine sanction to lawful authority is clearly stated in the Holy Scripture: "Let every soul," says the Apostle, "be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God and those that are, are ordained by God. Therefore, he who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they who resist purchase to themselves damnation. Therefore, be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. Render, therefore, to all their dues—tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" is due. You see, then, that there

can be no degradation in submitting to the civil magistrate, since he is invested with authority by God Himself. Obedience, therefore, is not an act of servility to man, but an act of homage paid to the supreme Legislator Himself.

Is not Jesus Christ the perfect type of manhood? He could not do an act that would lower His moral dignity. Yet "Christ," says St. Paul, "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of man, and in fashion found as man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Oh, my brethren, if Christ voluntarily submitted Himself to His own creatures, we ought to submit cheerfully to our fellow-beings when they have authority over us from God.

Second—Another will say: I disapprove of the methods by which certain candidates were elected to office. There were charges of corruption and bribery and intimidation against them. I am far from defending or extenuating the abuses existing in our system of popular elections. I am upholding only the principle of authority. No one can deplore the abuses of power more than I do. But absolute perfection can never be found in human affairs. In all earthly governments there are more or less betrayals of public trust. No government ever existed from the formation of society to the present day in which some abuse of power did not exist. And it will be so until the end of time. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end," though we cannot say *Amen* to it.

Third—You will say again: The man who is elected to office is inferior in intelligence and virtue to thousands of his constituents in the community who are relegated to private life, and I

grant it. But a candidate's election to office is determined, not by his personal, mental and moral acquirements, but by the suffrages of the people, or by the choice of his superior. And in the history of the world has it not repeatedly happened that persons of inferior culture and virtue have been clothed with authority over men of vastly superior intelligence?

Witness Saul, afterwards Paul the Apostle. He goes from Jerusalem to Damascus, breathing vengeance against the Christians. On the road he is struck blind by a visitation of God. Our Lord appears to him and says: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And Saul answers: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Our Lord does not take upon Himself the instruction of Saul, but sends him to an obscure disciple in a retired street in Damascus. Does Saul murmur at this command? Does he say: Why refer me to this lowly man? Why not commit me to one of Your Apostles to be baptized? He goes directly to Damascus, where he is baptized by Ananias. Surely Saul was more conspicuous for intellectual gifts than Ananias. Indeed, his name might never have come down to us if it had not been asociated with that of Saul. Cardinal Newman, one of the most brilliant luminaries of the nineteenth century, suffered himself to be instructed and baptized by an humble disciple of Paul of the Cross.

Witness again St. Peter. No member of the Apostolic College had so grievously sinned against his Master as Peter had, Judas alone excepted. He denied Christ, while the others had only abandoned Him. Yet Peter is appointed Prince of the Apostles and the visible head of the Church. I have never heard that any of the Apostles refused to obey Peter on account of his grievous transgres-

sion, or that they ever reproached him for his moral cowardice.

You will all admit that the Emperor Nero was the most depraved and blood-thirsty ruler that ever sat on a throne. Yet both Peter and Paul, in their Epistles, enjoin on Christians the obligation of honoring Caesar and observing the imperial laws. And these two Apostles submitted to his decrees, even at the sacrifice of their lives.

Fourth—Again, I may be told that there are thousands of citizens in the community who possess not only more intelligence and virtue, but also a greater capacity for discharging the duties of a public office than the present incumbent. This may be so. But let us remember that it is much easier for us to criticize a civil functionary than to fill his place with credit to ourselves. Censure is a very common and cheap commodity. I knew a gentleman in a distant city who had embarked in various mercantile pursuits, in all of which he signally failed. Yet that gentleman was a severe critic and had a very high opinion of his own abilities. He honestly believed that, were he a churchman, he could preside with honor over any see in the United States, and that, were he called to public life, he could acceptably fill a cabinet office or even the Presidential chair.

When Samuel J. Randall was speaker of the House of Representatives there was a certain member of Congress who was habitually annoying him by questioning his rulings and taking exception to his decisions. One day, in a full House, when a very important question was under consideration, the Speaker vacated the chair and invited the obnoxious member to preside in his absence. In a few minutes the House was in an uproar. Pandemonium reigned supreme. Several

members rose at the same time appealing to the chair. But the Speaker *pro tem* had lost his head. The confusion continued until the Speaker returned and resumed the chair, and only then was order restored. The offending member learned from this incident to be less critical in the future, and more respectful to the presiding officer.

One of the greatest social maladies of our times is a lack of reverence for those in authority. This is true on the part of children towards parents, of pupils towards teachers, of citizens towards magistrates, and sometimes even of Christians towards the Lord's anointed.

In this regard, we may all call to mind what is told of the brave and blessed Sir Thomas More. Even when Lord Chancellor Sir Thomas More, morning after morning, before sitting in his own court to hear the cases to be argued before him, was wont to go to the place where his father, Sir John, was presiding as judge, and there on his knees crave the parental blessing on the work of the day.

There is an intimate relation between reverence and obedience. It is difficult to obey those whom we fail to honor, while, on the contrary, obedience becomes agreeable when prompted by a spirit of respect for those appointed to rule over us. And we will not be wanting in this reverence when we regard those placed over us as the representatives of God.

Above all, let us pray the Lord of wisdom and justice that He may inspire our spiritual and civil rulers with a profound sense of their responsibilities, so that they may enact and enforce such legislation as will redound to the welfare of the Commonwealth, and to the peace and happiness of the people committed to their care.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

LAY CO-OPERATION.

PHIL. III., 17-21. "Be ye followers of Me."

IT is difficult, my dear brethren of the laity, to over-estimate the salutary and far-reaching influence you can exert on the individual and on society by co-operating with the clergy in promoting works of religion and charity, and especially by the integrity of your private lives. The reason is obvious. We are by nature imitative beings, and we instinctively walk after the pattern of those who have any authority over our conduct. If that influence is beneficial, it lifts us up to a higher plane of virtue; if it is pernicious, it lowers our moral standard. In this sense we may apply the words of the Psalmist: "With the holy thou wilt be holy, with the innocent thou wilt be innocent, and with the elect thou wilt be elect, and with the perverse thou wilt be perverted."[1] Hence it is an accepted maxim that a man is known by the company he keeps.

How many husbands have been converted to a life of faith and piety by the bright example of a Christian wife; how many wives have been equally moulded by the edifying husband! Saint Paul confirms this observation when he says that "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband."[2]

[1] Ps. xvii. [2] I. Cor. vii.

Do we not read even of domestics who moved in an humble sphere of life, without learning or influence, but who, nevertheless, by their unfeigned piety and conscientious attachment to duty were instrumental in leading their employers to the path of truth? In fact, if we trace the conversion of persons to its origin, we will find that not rarely it had its beginning in an edifying conversation, or in an act performed, which quietly and imperceptibly fell upon the soul like the gentle dew from heaven.

In His Sermon on the Mount our Savior lays particular stress on the influence of example. His words, indeed, were primarily addressed to His Apostles, and were chiefly intended for them and the pastors of the church; yet they are applicable to the laity in every condition of life, and in this sense I shall employ them today.

"You are," says the Savior, "the salt of the earth, but if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" As salt, by penetrating meat, has the virtue of preserving it from corruption, so should you preserve from moral defilement those among whom you live. If you, who by reason of your position in the family or society, should draw others to righteousness by the odor of your virtues—if you are contaminated by vice, what will become of the little ones of Christ when they are left without a guide?

"You are the light of the world." When the great luminary of day is shining in the heavens, none of the lesser lights of the firmament appears in view; they are extinguished by the effulgent rays of the sun. But when the great orb descends below the horizon, then the stars come forth to give light during the night, until the sun rises again in the East. Jesus Christ is the true Sun

of Justice. He is "God of God, Light of Light." "He is the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." While He was in the world He was the Light of the world. But when He sank beneath the horizon of the tomb He wished that you, His followers, should shine by your example as lesser lights during the long night of this life. And when the dawn of eternity shall come, Jesus, our day-star, will appear again in the splendor of His glory, to be forever our Light and our Guide.

You should, therefore, esteem it not only a duty but a privilege to be called by your Lord the light of the world. If it is a coveted honor to be a leader in political, social and professional life, how much greater is the distinction of being an acknowledged leader in the higher sphere of the moral world, and to be a bright particular star, guiding others by your steady light in the path of righteousness.

Our Savior proceeds: "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all who are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." As Christ compared the model Christian before to the stars in the firmament of heaven, so He compares him now to the lamp that gives light in the house, to teach you that you are called upon not only to edify those whom you may meet in the daily walks of public life, but that you are also bound in a particular manner to be like the Baptist, "burning and shining lights," to the members of your own household. This remark applies in a special manner to parents, who should be exemplars and patterns for their children and all the members of their family,

and who should be like two brilliant luminaries, "a lamp to the feet and a light to the eyes," of those whom God hath committed to their charge.

But alas, how many lamps are there that give but a faint and flickering light? How many that send forth a smoky and lurid flame? How many are utterly extinguished? Are there not many parents, especially fathers, who appear more like boarders and strangers in the household than responsible heads of families?

O, dearly beloved husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, I wish I could make you realize the sacred and sublime mission that Providence has assigned to you, and the powerful influence you can wield over your children and your servants. Strive to be temperate in speech as well as in meat and drink. Endeavor to be always chaste and prudent in conversation, especially in the presence of children, regarding whom the ancients gave this wise counsel: "Maxima reverentia debetur pueris"—the greatest reverence is due to children. Let kindness, gentleness and Christian politeness be blended with parental authority. Above all, teach your children by word and example to be faithful in the practice of public and private devotions, and then you shall exercise a more salutary power over your family than the most zealous priest or preceptor can exert.

I was deeply impressed with an incident which I read in a Baltimore paper some years ago. A little child had wandered away from his comfortable home, and when he wished to retrace his steps he could not tell the name of his street nor of his parents. A kind policeman took him to the station-house, where a cot was prepared for him, as it was too late to search for his home. Before going to bed the child said to the officer,

I would like to say my prayers before going to sleep, as mamma has told me. The officer and reporters were deeply moved at the artless request of the boy, and this was, perhaps, the most effective sermon they had heard for a long time.

Parents should be thoroughly convinced that their duty is not discharged by the mere avoidance of a bad example, but chiefly by giving a good one. The Scripture affords a striking illustration of this truth. There was a high priest named Heli in the days of Samuel the Prophet. He appears to have been personally a man of irreproachable life, faithful in observing the laws and ceremonies of the Lord. But he had two sons who were restrained by no sin that might gratify their licentious passions. The father, though afflicted at their conduct, failed to chide them, or he reproved them so feebly that his remonstrance had no effect in checking their evil habits. God's indignation was aroused against the father as well as his sons. They all met an untimely death on the same day; the whole family was stripped of the priestly dignity, and the race of Heli became utterly extinct because "he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them."[1]

But if the negative and passive attitude of Heli and other over-indulgent parents is visited by so severe a retribution, what shall we say of those whose scandalous lives are a pitfall to others? There is scarcely any crime so strongly denounced by our Savior as the sin of scandal: "Whoso shall scandalize one of those little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea."[2]

[1] I. Sam. iii., 13. [2] Matt. xviii.

On the other hand, a bright example of righteousness is most precious in the sight of God. It is the most eloquent defence of the religion of Christ against the tongue of calumny. St. Peter thus addresses the Christians of his times: "Having your conversation good among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak of you as evil-doers, they may, by the good works which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation." [1]

He refers to the slanders that were circulated against the primitive Christians. There was no crime, no matter how revolting, that was not laid at their door. They were charged with disloyalty to the civil government. They were accused of the most revolting licentiousness at their midnight assemblies, for they were forbidden to meet openly by day. They were held responsible for every public calamity that happened to the empire. If the Tiber overflowed its banks, destroying life and property; if the Nile failed to overflow its banks and irrigate the soil; if a pestilence, or famine, or war, or earthquake, or destructive conflagration occurred, the reason was: The gods are angry with the Christians on account of their crimes, and the cry went forth: "The Christians to the lions."

St. Peter instructs his disciples how to deport themselves during such trials. The purity of your lives, he tells them, will be the best refutation of the calumnies uttered against you. When the storm of prejudice has spent its fury, men will judge you dispassionately by the light of reason.

History repeats itself. Misrepresentations are now circulated against the Church, her ministers and members, as in the days of the Apostles. Itinerant lecturers make a trade of uttering the

[1] I. Pet. ii.

most absurd stories against us; and the more highly-seasoned the calumnies, the more they are relished. Let us refute these aspersions, not in anger and recrimination, but in a spirit of charity and forbearance. After all, there is an inextinguishable love of truth in the human breast. Prejudice is short-lived, but "the truth of the Lord abideth forever."

People in the long run will judge of our religion, not as it is said to be exemplified in the lives of those abroad, but as it is illustrated by our personal conduct at home. Their best criterion is the home product. The most effective way, therefore, to refute slander is to let our light so shine among men around us that they may see our good works and glorify our Father. Then the poisoned arrows of calumny aimed from afar will fall harmlessly at our feet; the foul vapors of defamation will melt away before the effulgent rays of your bright example.

St. Peter in the Epistle from which I have quoted addresses the Christian converts as "a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood." As you inherit the faith of the primitive Christians, so do you share in these exalted titles. Why does the Apostle call you priests, though you are not ordained to the ministry? Because it is your privilege and duty to offer to the Lord the sacrifice of praise in the sanctuary of your homes, and to preach the word by your edifying lives.

An enlightened and zealous laity is the glory of the Christian Church. The most luminous periods of the Church's history have been epochs conspicuous for laymen who vindicated the cause of Christianity by the eloquence of their writings, as well as by the sanctity of their lives. The golden age of Christianity gave birth to a long

line of learned and intrepid lay apologists of the faith. Among others I might mention Justin, the martyr; Athenagoras, Minutius Felix, Arnobius and Lactantius, who is styled the Christian Cicero.

Among the most notable lay defenders of the Catholic religion in the nineteenth century I could single out the Count de Maistre, Chateaubriand, Montalembert and Frederick Ozanam, in France; Gorres, Windhorst, Mallinckrodt, in Germany; Donoso Cortes, in Spain; Sir Kenelm Digby, Allies, and William G. Ward, in England; O'Connell, in Ireland, and Brownson, in the United States. Let us cherish the hope that God will raise up a formidable number of champions of Christ in our own country during the present century, who will walk in the footsteps of their Master, and be "a light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of the people of Israel."[1]

Your influence as lay apostles, my brethren, in the cause of truth and holiness is often greater in certain environments than that of the clergy. You are in touch with a circle of acquaintances from which the priest is excluded. You can listen to their confidential inquiries and solve their doubts. And your explanation is more persuasive, because it is not the official utterance of the minister of God, but the free and spontaneous exposition of a disinterested witness of the truth.

In the life of Saint Augustin we are informed that when he had learned of the conversion of his friend, Victorinus, "he was inflamed with the desire of imitating him." Perhaps like Victorinus you have some acquaintance who is entangled in the meshes of error and sin. If you hope to be successful in reclaiming him, imitate Victorinus, change his heart by the sincerity of your own con-

[1] Luke ii.

version and the integrity of your life. Let the joy and serenity that emanate from your soul inspire him to study and admire, to love and embrace the religion that produces in you those celestial fruits.

When the efforts of God's minister in the interests of religion strike no responsive chord in the breasts of the laity the situation is, indeed, most discouraging. But when the people are united with the bishop and clergy in the cause of God and humanity, then there is no such word as fail. We are bound to succeed, for God is with us. We form a triple chord that cannot be broken. We create a triple alliance far more enduring than the alliance of earthly potentates; for theirs is a compact of flesh and blood, but ours is a confederation cemented by the Divine virtues of faith, hope and charity. And why should you not co-operate with us? Are we not all, clergy and laity, children of the same heavenly Father? Are we not brothers and sisters of the same Jesus Christ? Has He not as much care of you as He has of us? Has He not suffered and died for you as well as for me? Are we not all sanctified by the same Holy Spirit? "There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all." [1]

Are we not all in the same bark of Peter, tossed by the same storms? Are we not all steering our course towards the same eternal shores? Are we not all heirs prospective of the same Heavenly Kingdom? There is not one reward for the priest and another for the laity. There is not one kind of crown for the Pope and another for the peasant. Ah! believe me, the tiara of the Pope and the mitre of the bishop will not shine more brilliantly in the

1. Cor. xii.

sight of God, nor be a safer passport to Heaven, than the modest cap of the peasant, unless the jewels of virtue are set in them.

St. Paul pays the following beautiful tribute to the Christians of Thessalonica: "You became followers of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in much tribulation with joy of the Holy Ghost, so that you were made a pattern to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For, from you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith which is toward God, is gone forth." [1]

And now, dearly beloved brethren, bear with me while I make a personal allusion to yourselves.

These words of praise that the Apostle bestows upon the Thessalonians I have no hesitation in applying to the faithful of Baltimore, and especially to you, beloved members of this Cathedral congregation. If the Catholic Church is so much respected and honored in this city; if you can lift up your heads and glory in your religion; if those who are not of the household of the faith are so forcibly drawn towards our altars and our worship, this happy condition of things is due less to our preaching than to your practice—less to our efforts of zeal than to your generous co-operation. If we strive to enlighten and edify you by announcing the Gospel, you edify us still more by illustrating in your lives the virtues we inculcate.

Yes, my brethren, you are our joy and our crown; and to paraphrase the words of the Apostle, you became followers of the Lord, receiving the word with much joy, so that ye were made a pattern to all who believe in Baltimore. For, from you and your fathers was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Maryland, but also

[1] I. Thess. i.

throughout many parts of the country. Continue to sow the good seed by letting your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

CHRIST THE ONLY ENDURING NAME IN HISTORY AND THE GREAT REFORMER OF SOCIETY.

MATT. XXIV., 15-35. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

JESUS Christ is the only vital and enduring name in history. He exerts today a paramount influence on the political and social, as well as on the moral and religious world, such as was never wielded by any earthly ruler. In contrast with the founders of empires, of systems of religion, and of the framers of laws, we may say of Him in the language of Holy Writ: "They shall perish, but Thou shalt remain, and all of them shall grow old as a garment. And as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed, but Thou (O Christ) art always the self-same, and Thy years shall not fail."

Kings and emperors have sought in various ways to perpetuate their name and fame. But their deeds and their very personality have faded away in the lapse of ages; or they have left after them the shadow of a once mighty name, which now evokes no enthusiasm and inspires no lofty sentiments.

The kings of Egypt erected for themselves those mighty pyramids that were to serve as tombs to preserve their mortal remains and as monuments to immortalize their glorious deeds. The pyramids exist unto this day amid the sands of Egypt, after

a lapse of five thousand years, and they seem destined to be as enduring as the mountains. But who are the kings that built them? What have they done in their day? The diligent researches of historians and antiquarians leave us more or less in doubt as to the names of the monarchs who erected them.

Christ our Lord built for Himself no tomb, and when living He left no instructions to His disciples to erect one for Him. He could say of Himself: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." And He had no monument that could be called His own when dead. He was buried in the tomb of a stranger, Joseph of Arimathea. There was no inscription on His tomb, but His name is emblazoned on the pages of history, and is indelibly stamped on the heart of humanity.

And even His sepulchre is honored today as no other resting-place was ever honored before or since His time. The Prophet Isaiah had predicted that "His tomb shall be glorious." And how well is the prophecy fulfilled! It is now the rendezvous of the nations of the earth. Christians and Mohammedans, Greeks and Latins are contending among themselves as to which of them shall have the honor of guarding and adorning the church where His body was interred.

Other men have sought to immortalize themselves by military exploits and conquests. Alexander the Great extended his dominion over the continent of Asia. Kingdom after kingdom yielded to his sway. He longed for new worlds, that he might subdue them. But scarcely was he laid to rest in his grave when his vast empire was dismembered and parceled out among his lieutenants. Who cares now for Alexander? What

enthusiasm does his name evoke? Where is the mausoleum erected to him? His history is known to a few scholars. But the great mass of humanity know and care as little for Alexander the Great as they know and care for Alexander the coppersmith, mentioned by St. Paul. Nearly two thousand years ago Jesus Christ founded a spiritual republic. He established it, not by the material sword, but by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. He established it, not by brute force, but by an appeal to the conscience and intellect of humanity. And the spiritual kingdom that He founded exists to this day, and is continually extending its lines! It is maintained, not by standing armies, but by the invincible influence of religious and moral sanctions.

Jesus Christ, hanging from the cross, has drawn to Himself a mightier host than ever followed the standard of Caesar or Hannibal: "When I am lifted up from the earth," He declared, "I will draw all things to Myself." I will draw them by the cords of love. Other leaders have captured cities. Jesus has captured the citadel of the heart.

In contemplating those great men who have been conspicuous in history the predominant sentiment we feel towards them is one of admiration. And our admiration increases in proportion as we see them ascending the pinnacle of fame. But we cannot be said to love them. They are too far removed from us to be loved. They dazzle us by their splendor, but they do not warm our hearts. A man to be loved must come down to our own level. We must be on familiar terms with him. Christ in this respect differs from all other great men. We not only admire and worship Him—we love Him. He has come down among us. He has become one of us. He has lowered Himself to our

estate. He has shared in our sorrows and infirmities. He has become the Son of Man, that we might be made the sons of God. He has been our Friend, our Brother, our Counsellor. The great Christian world loves Him. Millions in every age have enrolled themselves under His banner and are ready to die for Him.

Other sovereigns have signalized their reigns by framing laws for the government of their respective countries. Numa Pompilius, and long after him, Justinian, made laws for Rome. Solon and Lycurgus framed laws for ancient Greece. Alfred the Great and Edward the Confessor legislated for England. Napoleon compiled laws for France, which are well known by the title of the Code Napoleon. All these statutes were most useful in their day and generation. They were justly admired for their wisdom. But these laws were national in their character. They were suited to the type of one particular people, and were framed for one special form of government. They became more or less obsolete in the course of ages. The people outgrew them, and a change in the form of government involved a change in the fundamental laws of the country.

Christ has left us a code of legislation in the Gospels. These moral precepts are immutable, because they are founded upon the eternal principles of truth and justice. They have already stood the test of two thousand years; they are as vigorous and as authoritative today as when they came from the lips of their Divine Founder. And they will be binding on the conscience of men as long as human society itself shall last.

They are adapted to all times, to all places, to all circumstances and conditions of life. They are equally in force in every system of government—

in absolute empires, in constitutional monarchies and in free republics.

They appealed to the conduct and conscience of the ancient Greek and Roman; they appeal now to the subjects of Great Britain and to the citizens of the United States, as well as to the aboriginal tribes of Australasia and North America. The Sermon on the Mount and the great commandment of charity: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and soul, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," are as much binding on us as they were on the primitive Christians.

Christ, then, is not merely a man of history. He is not like other great men who have appeared on the theatre of life, have played their part and disappeared from view. He is not a meteor that flashed across the firmament of the world and was suddenly extinguished. No; He is the Sun of Justice shining on men down the ages, enlightening their minds, warming their hearts, and causing the fruits of grace and sanctification to grow in their souls.

He is walking invisibly today on the troubled waters of life, as He journeyed of old by the Lake of Genesareth. When Peter beheld his Master walking on the sea, he fancied it was only an apparition. But Christ was there, all the same. No less truly is He moving on the agitated ocean of the world. He is lifting up many a sinking soul from the sea of sorrow and tribulation, and saying to the warring elements: "Peace, be still."

Countless multitudes of hungering souls are following our Savior today, as they followed Him of old into the desert, and are receiving from Him the bread of heavenly consolation. Oh! how many a desolate heart cries out to Him in its anguish with

Peter and says: "Lord, to whom shall we go but to Thee! Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Jesus Christ confronts us at every step. We are in personal relations with Him. We see Him with the eyes of faith. We hear His friendly voice. We feel the warm pressure of His hand. His name is on everybody's lips. Lives innumerable are written of Him. Volumes are published commenting on every word that fell from His sacred lips. During the Christmas holidays the Christian world celebrates with joy the anniversary of His birth. Both Houses of Congress are prorogued; the courts of justice adjourn; schools are closed for the season, that all may take part in the festivities. And thus the whole civilized world unites in paying homage to Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary.

Christ is the only living force that can regenerate society. He is the only genuine social Reformer. The nation is sick, and the malady is all the more dangerous because the patient is unconscious of the disease. We are so intoxicated by material prosperity that we are become indifferent to the higher aspirations of the soul.

If Christianity is the highest type of civilization —and who can deny it—then is it not true that we are retrograding instead of advancing on certain lines? We glory in our system of universal education, in our enormous wealth, and in our territorial expansion. But these advantages are not evidences of Christian progress. Two thousand years ago pagan Rome had all these temporal advantages. The wealth of the nations poured into her lap. Her empire extended over three continents. She far excelled us in the arts, in oratory, poetry, philosophy and literature, and in all the refinements of cultivated society. Her paintings

and sculpture, her literary productions are still our models. And yet while she was in the zenith of her material and intellectual splendor she was in a state of moral and political decay. In fact, she was lapsing into barbarism.

My brethren, there is a barbarism more dense than the barbarism of the savage tribes of the forest. For the children of the forest, taught by the God of nature, adored the great Spirit. I speak of a mental obtuseness which eliminates God and an overruling Providence from the moral government of the world, which takes no account of a life to come, and of the responsibilities attached to it.

There is an assailant more to be dreaded than the bandit, the assassin and the footpad; for these offenders are outlawed by society, and the law is a terror to them. The most dangerous pest is the refined and polished libertine who is courted by society, who poses as a social leader, who desecrates the sanctity of the domestic temple, who alienates the affections of a wedded wife, and who makes the home desolate; who boasts of his conquests and glories in his shame. This moral wolf is so fastidious about his dress that he will carefully brush off the smallest speck of dust from his garments, while his soul is festering with loathsome foulness. He is the white-washed sepulchre described in the Gospel—clean without, but within full of corruption.

There is a social scourge more blighting and more destructive of family life than Mormonism. It is the fearfully increasing number of divorce mills throughout the United States. These mills, like the mills of the gods, are slowly but surely grinding to powder the domestic altars of the nation. Husband and wife are separated on the most flimsy pretexts. And as if the different

states of the Union were not sufficiently accommodating in this respect, one state has the unenviable distinction of granting a bill of divorce for the mere asking of it, on the sole condition of a brief sojourn within her borders.

I can conceive no scene more pathetic, nor one that appeals more touchingly to our sympathies than the contemplation of a child emerging into the years of discretion seeing her father and mother estranged from each other. Her little heart is yearning to love. She longs to embrace both her parents; but she finds that she cannot give her affection to the one without exciting the resentment or displeasure of the other.

A lady prominent in social life said to me last year in Newport: "I do not recognize any law, human or Divine, that can deprive a husband or wife of the right to separate and to enter fresh espousals, when they do not live in harmony together." You speak, I replied, of your rights; your privileges. But you have not a word to say of your duties and obligations. Ah! my brethren, if men and women had due consideration for their duties and responsibilities their rights would take care of themselves. There can be no right where there are no corresponding obligations. There are no rights against the law of God.

O Thou, who art the Father of Light and the Dispenser of every good and perfect gift, cast a ray of Thy divine light on our beloved country, that the spiritual and moral growth of the nation may keep pace with its material prosperity. Teach us to realize the fact that saving knowledge consists in knowing and worshiping Thee, "the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Teach us that he alone is free who enjoys the glorious liberty of the children of God, and that

freedom which delivers us from the bondage of sin; that he alone is truly rich who abounds in grace and righteousness; that he alone is great who is virtuous. Above all, may we learn from Thee that true national honor and glory and genuine imperialism in found in the empire of the soul over its passions, and "that greater is he who conquereth himself than he who taketh cities."

INDEX

ACHAB, 216, 257, 356.
Achitophel, 331.
Adoration of the Forty Hours, 297.
Adrian IV., Pope, on the cares of the Papacy, 119.
Adversity, uses of, 269.
Alexander the Great, 6, 49, 55, 175, 205, 213, 364, 518.
Alfred the Great, 356, 520.
Algeciras Conference, 217.
Allies, 513.
Angelic Hierarchy, 383.
Angelo, Michael, 104, 169.
Anger and Revenge, 466.
Apostles, Christ's love for His, 93.
Applause Human, emptiness of, 239.
Arbitration International, 215.
Archilochus, 159.
Archimedes, 448.
Aristotle, on suicide, 335.
Arnobius, 513.
Ascension Day, sermon for, 260.
Athenagoras, 513.
Audu, Archbishop, Patriarch of the Chaldaeans, 480.
Augustin, St., 60, 140, 148, 364, 513.
Aurelius, Marcus, 392.
Authority, obedience to all lawful, 497.

BANCROFT, on religious liberty in Maryland Colony, 81.
Bank Officals, dishonesty of, 492.
Basil, St., 483.
Blaine, J. G., 25.
Blanche, Queen, type of Christian Mother, 61.
Bede, Venerable, 483.
Bernard, St., 55, 415, 483.
Borromeo, St. Charles, 105.
Brownson, 513.
Brutus, Marcus, 333, 396.
Buddha, 297.

CAESAR, JULIUS, 6, 55, 175, 179, 198, 205, 333, 364.
Calvert, Leonard, 81.
Carroll, Archbishop, 78.
Carroll, Charles, of Carrollton, 79, 328.
Cato, 333, 396.
Ceremonies, use of religious, 193.
Chase, Samuel, 79.
Chateaubriand, 513.
Cheerfulness, 23.
Christ, His compassion for human suffering, 14.
His sympathy for the poor, 16.
Our Friend, 32.
His sovereignty over the soul, 171.
Our King, 172.
Interior Sorrows of, 182.
The Good Shepherd, 223.
His mercy to sinners, 312.
Study and imitation of, 391.
Only enduring name in history and the great reformer of society, 517.
Christmas Day, sermon, 42.
Christian, no empty name, 205.
Christians, our dignity as, 368.
Christian Faith, blessings of, 447.
Chrysostom, St., on the Epis-

tles of St. Paul, 131.
On listening to the Word of God, 257.
Church, growth of, in the United States, 78.
Secondary causes of the growth of the primitive, 107.
Unity of the, 223.
Columbus, Christopher, 208, 230.
Communion, frequent, 307.
Confession, 457.
Demanded by cry of nature, 461.
Secrecy of, 462.
Confucius, 297.
Consumer's League, 21.
Conversions in Diocese of Baltimore, 80.
Co-operation, lay, 111, 506.
Cortes, Donoso, 513.
Corpus Christi, feast of, 297.
Creation, variety in the works of, 382.
Crœsus, 175.
Cyrus, 175.

DAMON and PYTHIAS, example of friendship, 34.
Darius, 175.
David, King, 137, 246.
Death, reflections on, 426.
Defections from the Faith, causes, 85.
Demagogues, pernicious influence of, 387.
Digby, Sir Kenelm, 513.
Diocletian, 356.
Dionysius the Tyrant, King of Syracuse, 34.
Distractions at Prayer, 104.
Dishonesty, 487.
Divorce in the United States, 523.
Divorce a vinculo, 71.
Dogma, new definitions of, 230.

EASTER SUNDAY, sermon, 201.
Education, Public School System of, cause of shrinkage from the Faith, 86.
Edward VI., suppression of ceremonial worship under, 193.
Edward I., King of England, 367.
Edward the Confessor, 520.
Edwin, King of Northumbria, 108.
Eleanor, wife of Edward I. of England, 367.
Elections, Presidential, 117.
Elias, 304.
Elizabeth, St., 167.
Emigrants, rapid assimilation of, in United States, 221.
Esther, 246.
Eternal Happiness, conditions for attaining, 260.
Eucharist, the banquet of the, 303.
Example, influence of good, 507.

FAITH, blessings of Christian, 447.
Source of light to intellect, 447.
Gives a just appreciation of things, 449.
Comfort of, 450.
Source, inexhaustible of spiritual riches, 455.
Forty Hours' Adoration, 297.
Francis Xavier, St., 290.
Franklin, Benjamin, 79.
Freedom, moral, prerogatives and responsibilities of, 355.
French Missionaries, in North America, 83.
Friendship, Christian, 32.

GASTON, JUDGE WILLIAM, 62.
Ghost, Holy, descent of the, 278.
Gibbon, on growth of Christian religion, 294.

Gorres, 513.
Gospel, superiority over the Old Law, 154.
A law of love and liberty, 158.
Grant, General, 214.
Gratitude, 409.
Gregory, the Great, St., 137, 483.

HAMLET, 337.
Hannibal, 205, 175.
Happiness, eternal, conditions for attaining, 260.
Henry VIII., Wolsey's devotion to, 177.
Heresy, opposed to unity of belief, 227.
Herod, 356.
Holy Ghost, descent of the, 278.
Horace, 122.
Human Respect, opposed to Christian Manhood, 138.

IGNATIUS, St., conversion of, 480.
Imitation of Christ, The, authorship of, 234.
Immigrants, Catholic to the United States, 83.
Immortality of Man, 261.
Ingratitude, cause of sorrow to Christ, 184.
International Peace, 211.
Arbitration, 215.
Irenæus, St., on growth of Christian Religion, 291.
Irish Missionaries in the United States, 82.

JEFFERSON, PRESIDENT, Inaugural Address, 217.
Jezabel, 356.
Job, 351.
Joel, Prophet, on public ceremonies, 197.
John, St., the Evangelist, Christ's love for, 94.
Joseph, St., 101, 233.
Joseph, Patriarch, 270, 351.
Josue, a figure of Jesus, 171.
Joy, Christian, 23.
Judas Iscariot, 332, 356.
Judgment, The General, 1.
Judith, 166, 246.
Justin Martyr, 112, 513.
Justinian, 520.

KENRICK, ARCHBISHOP, 408.

LACTANTIUS, 112, 513.
Laity, co-operation of with clergy, 506.
Lateran, Council of, on reception of Holy Eucharist, 308.
Lazarus, Christ's love for, 92
Lee, General, surrender at Appomattox, 214.
Leo, St., on spiritual joy, 27.
Leo XIII., arbitrator between Germany and Spain regarding the Caroline Islands, 216.
Liberty, religious, Maryland the home of, 81.
Literature, bad, pernicious effects of, 149.
Literature, good, 151.
Literature, Catholic, 151.
Little Sisters of the Poor, 46.
Lord's Day, observance of, 437.
Louis XIV., King of France, 49, 258.
Louis, St., King of France, 61, 301.
Love, the essential characteristic of Christian Religion, 89.
Lucretia, 334.
Lycurgus, 520.

MACBETH, 160, 332.
Magdalen, Mary, example of Christ's mercy, 264, 316.
Magnificat, The, 167.
Manning, Cardinal, 453.
Manhood, Christian, 133.

Manna, figure of the Eucharist, 304.
Mallinckrodt, 513.
Marriage, Christian, 68.
Unity, sanctity and indissolubility of, 69.
Marriages, mixed, pernicious effects of, 86.
Mary, Mother of Jesus, why the Church honors, 163.
Her faithfulness to Our Lord, 187.
Maryland, home of religious liberty, 81.
de Maistre, Count, 513.
Massillon, Bishop of Clermont, 50, 258.
Mercy, The Tribunal of, 457.
Micheas, 257.
Minutius, Felix, 513.
Mohammed, 297.
Monica, St., type of Christian mother, 60.
Montalembert, 513.
More, Sir Thomas, 6, 191, 262, 505.
Mother, The Christian, her influence for good, 64.

NAME OF JESUS, its significance, 48.
Napoleon, 55, 205, 520.
Nero, 6, 356, 504.
Neumann, Bishop, 408.
Newman, Cardinal, 453, 503.
Newspapers and Periodicals, 149.
Numa Pompilius, 520.

OBEDIENCE FILIAL, 498.
Obedience to Civil Authority, 499.
Obedience to Ecclesiastical Authority, 498.
Obedience to all Lawful Authority, 497.
O'Connell, Daniel, 137, 513.
Olave, King, 230.
Ozanam, Frederick, 513.

PALLADIUS, St., 230.
Parents, Christian, their mission, 57, 508.
Passion Sunday, sermon for, 182.
Passion Play, Oberamergau, 299.
Paul, St., sermon on, 125.
His writings, 126.
His eloquence, 126.
His virtues, 127.
Sufferings and privations, 129.
His love for God and his fellowman, 129.
His patience in trials and sufferings, 272.
Payne, Thomas, author of Rights of Man, 388.
Peace, International, 211.
Penance, Sacrament of, 457.
Its Divine Institution, 458.
Secrecy of the Tribunal of, 462.
Pentecost, Feast of, 278.
Philadelphia, Cathedral, sermon at Consecration of, 399.
Pise, Charles Constantine, 329.
Pius VI., on reading of the Holy Scriptures, 153.
Pius IX., Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, 231.
Pius X., his election, 119.
Plato, 392.
Population, Catholic in U. S. at time of Bishop Carroll, 79.
At present time, 80.
Prayer, source of light, comfort and strength, 241.
Distractions at, 104.
Means of a conversion, 241.
Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Society for the, 58.
Providence, A Personal, 346.

RANDALL, SAMUEL J., 504.
Razias, 332.
Reading, spiritual, 143.

Religion, Christian, marvellous diffusion of, 288.
Revenge and Anger, 466.
Romulus, 364.
Roosevelt, President, presented with Nobel Prize, 217.
Intervention in War between Russia and Japan, 217.

SADI, Persian Poet, on patience in suffering, 276.
Samoan Difficulty, between U. S. and Germany, settled by Berlin Conference, 1889, 216.
Samson, 147, 332.
Sanctification of Ordinary Actions, 97.
Sarto, Cardinal, Patriarch of Venice (Pius X.), 119.
Saul, King, suicide, 332.
Schools, Public, cause of defections from faith, 86.
Schools, Parochial, 87.
Science, fostered by the Catholic Church, 322.
Scipio, 364.
Scott, General, 214.
Scott, Sir Walter, 493.
Scriptures, reading of the, 143.
Secrecy of the Confessional, 462.
Selkirk, Alexander, on solitude, 18.
Seneca, 95, 335, 392, 396.
Shakespeare, on suicide, 337.
Shepherd, The Good, 223.
Sickness, a season of Divine mercy, 477.
Simon, the Hebrew Chieftain, 214.
Sin, power conferred by Christ of remitting, 458.
Sinners, Christ's mercy to, 312.
Sisterhoods, devotion of Catholic, 453.
Social Inequality, 385.
Socrates, 335, 389.
Solicitude of Mind, 418.
Solon, 520.
Sorrows, Interior of Christ, 182.
Spiritual Reading, 143.
Stocks and Bonds, inflation of, 492.
Stoics, suicide an heroic virtue, 333.
Stradivarius, 383.
Strickland, Agnes, 49.
Suffering, road of, path to glory, 201.
Law of human life, 269.
Suicide, moral aspects of, 330.
Causes of, 335.
Forbidden by Divine Law, 338.
Crime against society, 339.
More revolting than murder, 339.
Christian religion, powerful influence against, 344.
A virtue amongst the Pagans, 333.
Susanna, 147, 191.
Sweat-shops, evil effects of, 20.

TANEY, Chief Justice, 253.
Tarquin, 334.
Temples, The Three, 373.
Tertullian, 112, 291.
Thanksgiving, 409.
Thomas, St., of Aquin, 235, 244.
Titus, his cruelty to the Jews, 214.
Transfiguration, 154.
Trent, Council of, on frequent Communion, 307.

UNITED STATES, Wars of, 212.
United States and Pagan Rome compared as to Wars, 212.
United States, prosperity, due in large measure to immigration, 220.

United States, observance of the Lord's Day in the, 439.
Unity of the Church, 223.
Not impaired by doctrinal definitions, 230.

VINCENT de PAUL, ST., 356.
Vincent de Paul, St., Society of, 46.
Virgil, on suicide, 333.

WAR, the rule in Pagan Rome,
Wars of the United States, 212.
Ward, William G., 513.
Washington, George, 50, 79, 205.
Reverence for his mother, 61.
Exhortation for International Peace, 217.
Webster, Daniel, 82.
Windhorst, 513.
Wolsey, devotion to Henry VIII., 177.
Wood, Archbishop, 408.
Word of God, why unprofitable to many hearers, 250.
Working Classes, condition of, 19.
Worship, public, the grandeur and utility of, 399.
Wright, Robert, Governor of Maryland, 138.

XAVIER, ST. FRANCIS, 290.

ZENO, 331, 392.

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